Pieces

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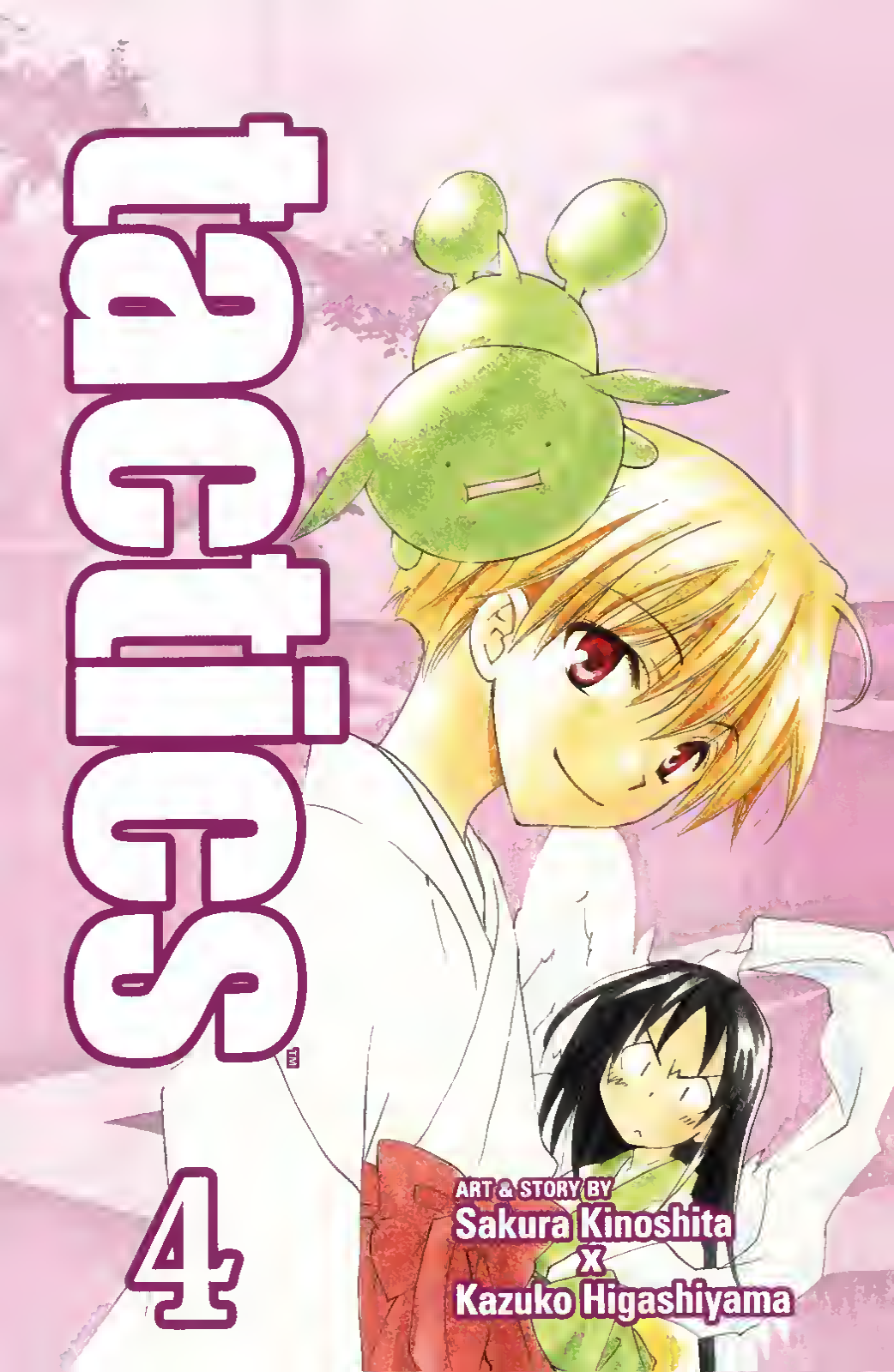

ART & STORY BY
Sakura Kinoshita
X
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics 4

木下さくら　東山和子

tactics

Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

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tactics

Volume 4
by Sakura Kinoshita and
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics Volume 4

ART & STORY BY: Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

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Naumaku sarabatata gyateibyaku ...
Saraba bokkeigyaku sarabata...
...tarata senda makaroshaba ken...
Tenmage doukai bu sho!
Makai bukai doujyori!
Shi ma san shou jou dou ra!
Issou byou doumu shabetsu!

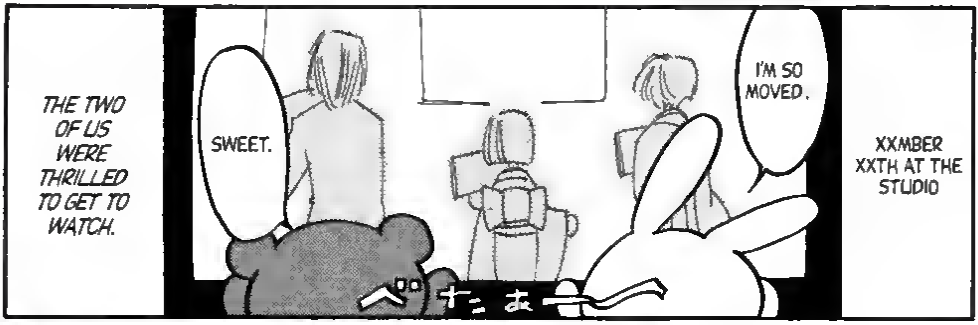
CHAPTER 9

SPECIAL RE-RECORDING!

Sakura Kinoshita and Kazuko Higashiyama's

tactics Drama CD Off-Recording Report!

SINCE WE'RE BAD AT SELF-PORTRAITS, PLEASE ENJOY THE REPLACEMENTS.
♡



LASTLY, TAKAHIRO SAKURA-SAN PLAYED HARUKA.
"YOUR HEART IS AS PURE AS A HEAVENLY MAIDEN'S..."
HE WAS HARUKA! HARUKA WAS INSIDE THESE WALLS!
dammit.
I CAN'T SAY THIS.
THEN THERE WAS TOMOKO KAWAKAMI-SAN WHO PLAYED YOLIKO
SHE WAS ADORABLE AND SUPER IMPRESSIVE.
HOW CAN YOU BE SUCH A BLOCK-HEAD?! GOD!
KOUKI MIYATA-SAN PLAYED THE ROLE OF KAN-CHAN WHICH WAS A STRESSFUL PART FROM THE GET-GO
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU ALL!
I SWEAR WE FOUND YOUR INNOCENCE HIGHLY STIMULATING!
Script

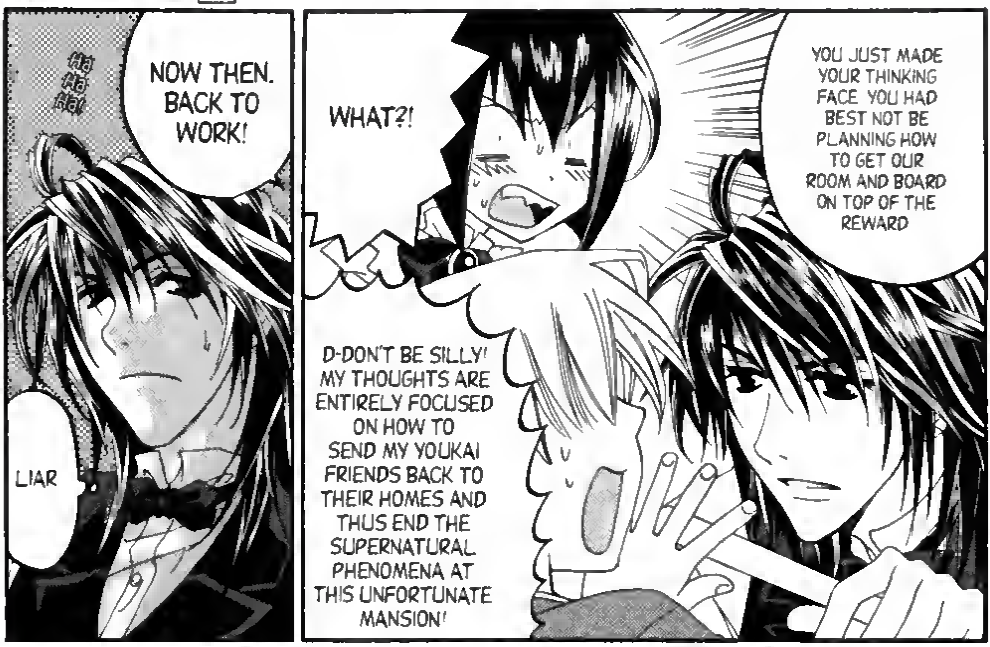
★ MORE ON PAGE 70!

* THIS MANGA WAS SERIALIZED IN THE COMIC BLADE APRIL 2003 ISSUE BEFORE THE COMIC BLADE DRAMA CD SERIES OF "TACTICS" VOLUME 1 WENT ON SALE.

KAN-CHAAAN!
IT'S TIME GO HOME...AND BE BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.

HOW ARE THE YOUKAI SEND-OFFS GOING?
HI, HARUKA, YOUKO-CHAN FINE-- HOW IS IT ON YOUR END?
I FOUND A FEW AFTER CLEANING UP IN THE LOBBY. AND THERE WERE A BUNCH IN THE DINING HALL.
SHEESH. NO MATTER WHAT I DO, THEY JUST KEEP ON COMING.
まいっ
HEY, KANTAROU.
HM?

tactics 4


Ha Ha Ha!
NOW THEN. BACK TO WORK!
LIAR
WHAT?!
YOU JUST MADE YOUR THINKING FACE. YOU HAD BEST NOT BE PLANNING HOW TO GET OUR ROOM AND BOARD ON TOP OF THE REWARD
D-DON'T BE SILLY! MY THOUGHTS ARE ENTIRELY FOCUSED ON HOW TO SEND MY YOUKAI FRIENDS BACK TO THEIR HOMES AND THUS END THE SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA AT THIS UNFORTUNATE MANSION!

I SEE LET ME MAKE SURE I'M UNDER-STANDING THIS CORRECTLY
FOR THE TIME BEING, WE'LL STILL BE HAUNTED BY STRANGE SOUNDS AND THE OCCASIONAL POSSESSION OF MY EMPLOY-EES?

I'M AFRAID SO, PRESIDENT SAKURAZAWA. IT SEEMS THE YOUKAI KEEP POURING IN FROM SOME UNKNOWN SOURCE.
UNTIL I FIND AND REMOVE SAID SOURCE, THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THE PHENOMENON.

I BROUGHT WHAT YOU ASKED FOR.
OOH... BAD BOY, HARUKA. YOU HAVE TO *KNOCK* AT A LADY'S DOOR.
THANK YOU, HARUKA-SAN.

HFF!
ACHOO!

BUT FEAR NOT, PRESIDENT!
I SWEAR THAT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I, RARE YOUKAI BUSTER KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA, WILL--

YOUR COMPANY IS INVOLVED IN THE FABRIC TRADE, RIGHT?
WHAT A PROGRESSIVE WOMAN YOU ARE. I'M VERY IMPRESSED
IT LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER SMUGGLER'S BEEN CAUGHT.
ズラッ!
WOW. THAT'S A LOT OF NEWSPAPERS
ARE YOU PLANNING TO READ THEM ALL, PRESIDENT?
IN THIS PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY, I HAVE TO TRULY EXCEL AS A MANAGER IF I WANT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.
YOU MEAN AN OPIUM SMUGGLER? I'VE HEARD THEY'RE COMMON THESE DAYS.
WELL, IT SEEMS THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO SMUGGLE OPIUM IN FROM CHINA. MY COMPANY'S BEEN QUESTIONED ABOUT IT, WHICH IS BECOMING A GIANT HEADACHE
OPIUM?
IT'S A TYPE OF NARCOTIC.

IT'S MEDICINE?
THEN WHY IS IT ILLEGAL?
BECAUSE IT'S TOO ADDICTIVE, HARUKA.
IT CAN BE MIXED TO WORK AS A SEDATIVE AND COUGH-RELIEVING PAINKILLER.
OPIUM CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM TWO KINDS OF POPPY SEEDS.
WHEN YOU HEAT THE OPIUM AND INHALE THE RESULTING SMOKE, YOU GET THE SENSATION OF BEING INTOXICATED
I'VE HEARD IT CAN EVEN WORK AS A STIMULANT, RELIEVING EXHAUSTION
BUT ONCE YOU'RE ADDICTED, A LACK OF OPIUM CAUSES FEELINGS OF IRRITATION, AND ONE CAN SUFFER FROM NERVE PROBLEMS BEFORE EVENTUALLY BREAKING DOWN AND EVEN DYING

PEOPLE ARE WEAK TO PLEASURE AND TEMPTATION, HARUKA.
?
HUNH. IF IT'S SO DANGEROUS, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY PEOPLE WOULD STILL WANT IT.
SINCE THE DRUG IS SO DEBILITATING
...BOTH THE USE AND SALE OF IT ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED
ER... YES YOU'RE INTO THAT, ICHINOMIYA-SAN?
THERE'S NO HUMAN WORD TO DESCRIBE MY LOVE!
がばっ
SHOUKIKU?! AS IN SHOUKIKU AYANOKOUJI, THE MOST POPULAR MEMBER OF THE FEMALE GIDAYUU RECITERS?!
HM... SHOUKIKU'S HAVING A PUBLIC PERFORMANCE IN ASAKUSA TOMORROW.
WHAT?!
HAVING YOUNG GIRLS DRESS AS MEN AND NARRATE FOR THE BUNRAKU THEATRE IS REALLY GETTING POPULAR.
I'M *DYING* TO SEE IT, BUT I JUST DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.
ぽわん
ぽわん

EEEK! SHOULD I BUY FLOWERS?! WHATEVER WILL I WEAR?!
squee! squee!
who cares?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
THEN WHY DON'T WE ATTEND HER PERFORMANCE TOGETHER?
SHOUKIKU HAPPENS TO BE AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE
HOW SWEET OF YOU, YOUKO-CHAN! I WAS JUST GETTING THIRSTY.
OH, MS PRESIDENT! I'VE BROUGHT YOU YOUR TEA
SOMETHING WRONG, YOUKO-CHAN?
JUST FIX THE MANSION, KAN-CHAN!
HANDLE THE REST FOR ME, HARUKA-CHAN. KAN-CHAN AND I HAVE WORK TO DO
HUH?
WHAT?

IF YOU'RE GONNA WIN HER OVER, WE HAVE TO SHOW HER THAT YOU'RE NOT THE COMPLETE SLOUCH YOU ACTUALLY ARE!
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO FINALLY *MARRY INTO MONEY LIKE YOU MEAN IT!*
OARN RIGHT, YOUKO-CHAN! YOU'RE LIKE A SINISTER CUPID!
PRESIDENT SAKURAZAWA'S RICH! AND SINGLE!
ACHOO!
GLUG GLUG GLUG
ROGER THAT! DADDY'S GONNA DO HIS THING!
HARUKA-CHAN'S COVERING FOR US, SO LET'S GET TO WORK!
たったかたー

HM? OH, RIGHT. SO?
sniff
HARUKA-SAN?
.....
...I HEARD YOU'RE LIVING WITH ICHINOMIYA-SAN AND YOUKO-SAN RIGHT NOW
ARE EITHER OF YOU ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED WITH YOUKO-SAN?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
UH...NOTHING THOSE WORDS JUST AREN'T USUALLY IN A SENTENCE TOGETHER
YOUKO...IS A FRIEND. IN MY EYES, AT LEAST.
WHY WOULD YOU ASK A QUESTION LIKE THAT?

WHY...?

IF I TOLD YOU YOU'D PIQUED MY INTEREST..
..WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT IT?

南無喝囉怛那
哆喝囉夜耶
南無 阿唎耶
婆盧羯帝烁楞婆耶
IF THE SPIRITS ARE VENGEFUL, THE HEIHAKU TREMBLES.
THE HEIHAKU'S SUPPOSED TO REACT DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE CALLER OF THE YOUKAI DID IT WITH VENGEFUL SPIRITS OR A GRUDGE
BUT THE GRUDGE OF THE DECEASED CAUSES THE HEIHAKU TO MOVE UP AND DOWN.
KAN-CHAN, IT'S NOT WORKING!
REALLY?
EXCELLENT! THAT MEANS THE SOURCE IS A GRUDGE.
IT'S MOVING UP AND DOWN!
グイグイ
IT FEELS LIKE THE SPIRITS ARE BEING FORCEFULLY CALLED OUT FROM THE OTHER PLANE
ACK! LOOK, LOOK!

にゃ
あ
YAAAAH!!
AAAAAH!!
THIS MANSION IS HUGE. IT EVEN HAS A SECOND BUILDING
TOO BAD WE HAVE TO SEARCH THAT, TOO.
At least it makes this worth it
IT'D BE FASTER TO JUST MOVE, DON'T YOU THINK?!
UGH, THEY JUST KEEP COMING!

WHAT GIVES? FOR A FELLOW EMPLOYEE, THAT WAS CRYPTIC AS HELL.
?!
THE MOON'S BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT.
CARE TO JOIN ME IN DRINKING TO IT?
HEY THERE, BIG GUY.

HARUKA HAVE YOU EVER FALLEN IN LOVE WITH A HUMAN?
THAT'S A SUDDEN AND LOADED QUESTION
I GUESS ...
BUT I FIGURED I'D ASK SINCE YOU'D NEVER BRING UP THE TOPIC YOURSELF
YOUKAI AND HUMANS DON'T SUIT EACH OTHER
THEIR VALUES AND LIFE EXPECTANCIES ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO INVOLVED WITH ANY HUMAN REALLY
THAT'S YOUR...
HUH?
NO-- NEVER MIND

NOW I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.
WOW THAT'S PRETTY RARE
HM I SEE.
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?
WHY ARE YOU STILL SO ATTACHED TO ME?
THE DEMON EATING TENGU YOU READ ABOUT IN YOUR BOOKS AND WHAT I AM NOW ARE ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BEINGS
THE ME I AM NOW...
...ISN'T WHO I USED TO BE.

YOU'RE MY FRIEND, HARUKA.
INTIMACY IS HOW I TRY TO GET CLOSER TO YOU
YOU REALLY DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
WHAT YOU ARE NOW AND WHAT YOU USED TO BE ARE COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT
I'M GOING FOR A WALK.
ARE YOU MAD AT ME?
NO.
IT'S ONLY NATURAL I'D WANT THAT

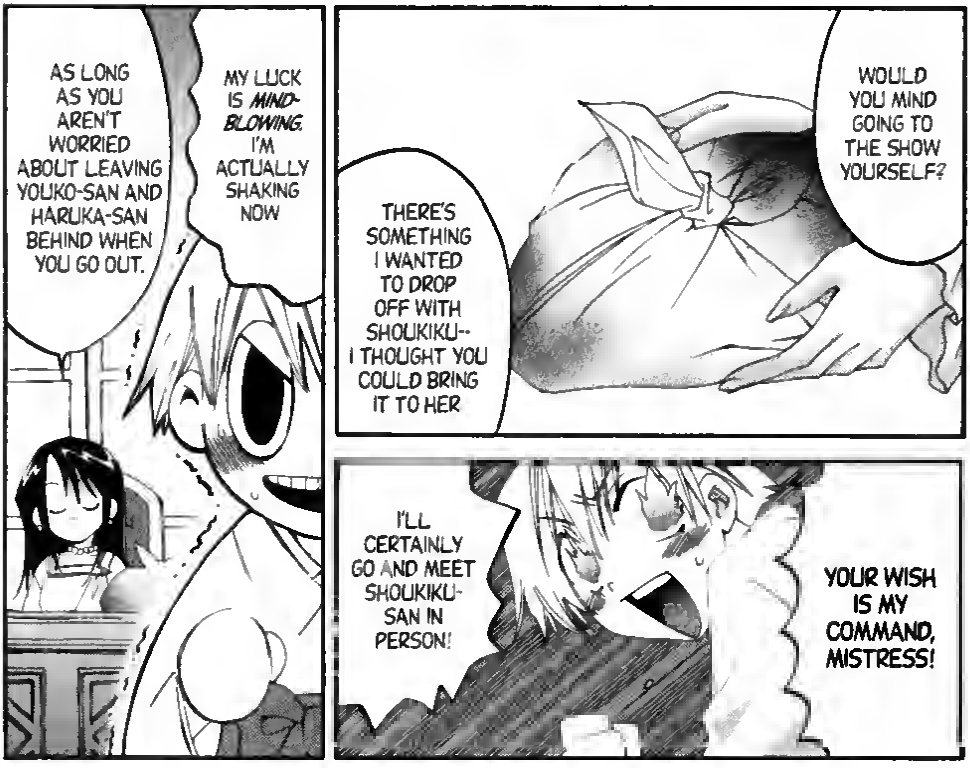
THE WAY THINGS STAND...
...I ACTUALLY THINK YOU MAY BE SPOILING ME.

YOU'RE MY HOPE, HARUKA.
ACHOO!

THE SMELL IN THIS ROOM IS BOTHERING ME.
OOPS!
DID YOU SPRAY PERFUME IN HERE?
sniff
NO...
MY, HARUKA-SAN. DO YOU HAVE A COLD?
WHAT A KLUTZ I AM! I'M SO SORRY.
IT'S OKAY-- YOUKO'S THE ONE WHO SAID TO BRING IT TO YOU.
HARUKA-SAN
WOULD YOU MIND CLEANING ME UP?

I KNEW YOUR PRIDE WOULDN'T LET YOU BEND OVER.
YOU DON'T WANT TO, DO YOU?
.....
HELLO, MS PRESIDENT! MAYBE WE SHOULD GET GOING TO SHOUKIKU-SAN'S.
I SPILLED MY TEA.
BY THE WAY-- I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU, ICHINOMIYA-SAN
IS HARUKA UPSET ABOUT SOME-THING?

SOME WORK CAME UP UNEXPECTEDLY TODAY.
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T MAKE IT TO SHOUKIKU'S PERFORMANCE.
I-IS THAT SO? OH WELL.
I'M STILL STRUGGLING TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THOSE SPIRITS, SO THIS IS PROBABLY FOR THE BEST
THE BEST.
WAIT, ICHINOMIYA-SAN.


WOULD YOU MIND GOING TO THE SHOW YOURSELF?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO DROP OFF WITH SHOUKIKU-- I THOUGHT YOU COULD BRING IT TO HER
YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND, MISTRESS!
I'LL CERTAINLY GO AND MEET SHOUKIKU-SAN IN PERSON!
MY LUCK IS *MIND-BLOWING.* I'M ACTUALLY SHAKING NOW
AS LONG AS YOU AREN'T WORRIED ABOUT LEAVING YOUKO-SAN AND HARUKA-SAN BEHIND WHEN YOU GO OUT.

NO, I DON'T MIND.
I TRUST THOSE TWO.
AH.
TRUST... IS IT?
BY THE WAY, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO RID YOU OF THE YOUKAI SOON.
FRIEND-LY?
THEY SEEM TO WANT TO GO HOME, SO I THINK I'LL BECOME FRIENDLY WITH THEM IF I CAN MANAGE TO HEAR TO THEIR STORY.
THAT'S MY TALENT, MISS.
BEFRIENDING YOUKAI IS MY SPECIALTY.

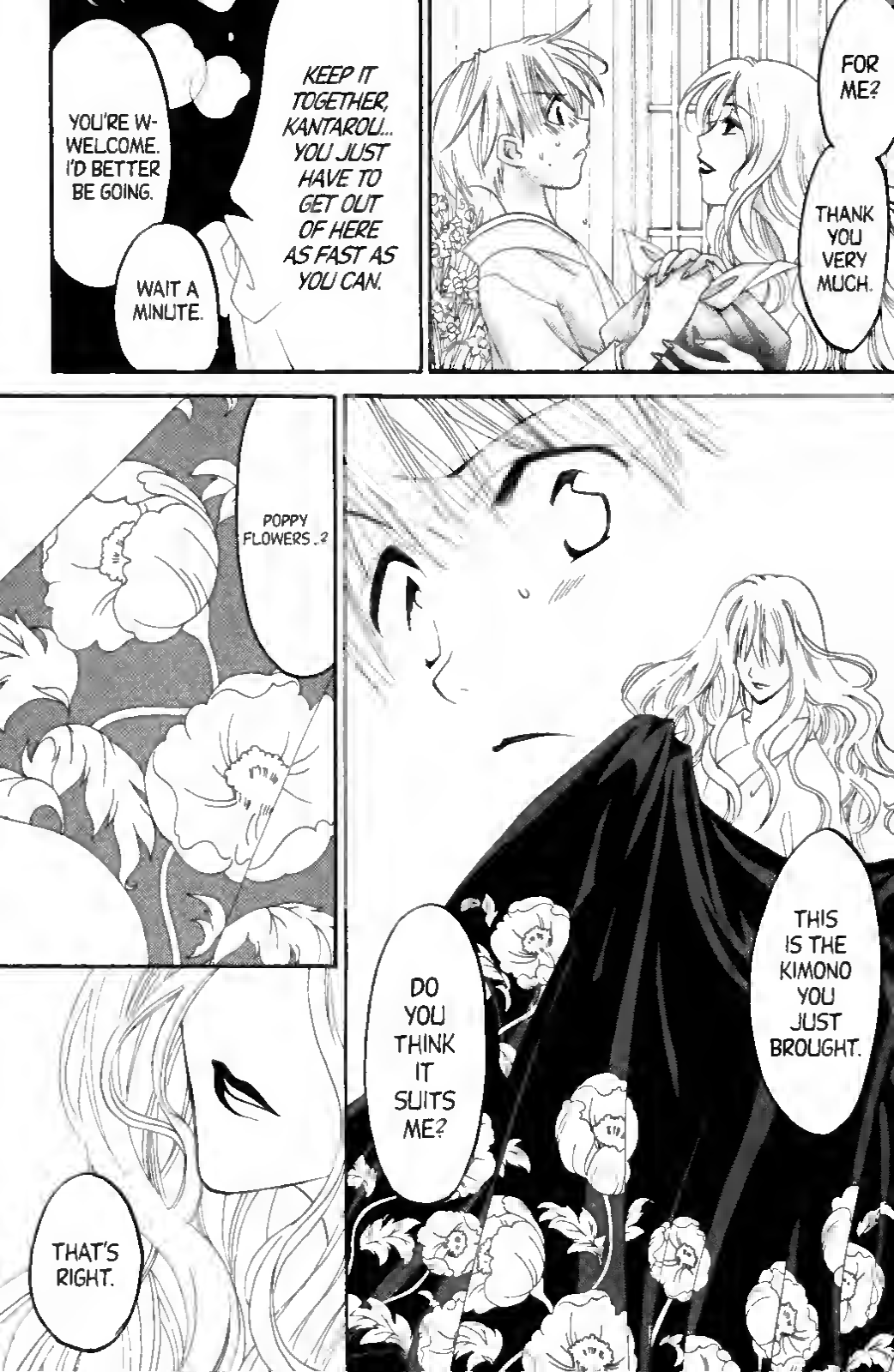
I CAN'T BELIEVE I ACTUALLY GET TO GO BEHIND THE SCENES HERE
THIS PLACE IS BEAUTIFUL!
NOW THEN-- THIS MUST BE THE DRESSING ROOM OF MY BELOVED SHOUKIKU.
I'M SO NERVOUS!
EASY, KANTAROU BREATHE IN...
HFF.. Haah...
NOW OUT.

E-EXCUSE ME-- I'M HERE FROM PRESIDENT SAKURAZAWA
IS SOMEONE OUT THERE? IF YOU NEED SOMETHING, PLEASE COME IN.
A SOLDIER?
SORRY TO INTRUDE--
?!

I WONDER IF KAN-CHAN DROPPED OFF THAT PACKAGE LIKE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO I HOPE HE DIDN'T SELL IT ON THE STREET.
WHAT IS IT, YOUKO? YOU WANTED TO GO?
OH, I'M SORRY-- I ONLY HAD ONE TICKET.
N-NO, IT'S OKAY!
HARUKA CHAN AND I DON'T GO GAGA OVER EVERY NEW FAD LIKE KAN-CHAN
I DID FIND A STACK OF GIRLS' PHOTOS IN HIS DESK DRAWER
HOW NICE THAT THE THREE OF YOU
..REALLY DO TRUST ONE ANOTHER.
HUH?
UH, OKAY.
THAT'S NOT USUALLY POSSIBLE BEFORE YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS TESTED.
SO...
...LET'S TRY A TEST, SHALL WE?

?!
WHAT?
THUD
I ASSUME YOU DON T WANT THE GIRL TO GET HURT.
MY B BODY S... NUMB!
MAYBE NOW YOU LL BE A BIT MORE COOPERATIVE.

throb
throb
THIS THROBBING PAIN CAN ONLY MEAN...
MY CHEST!
throb
SHOUKIKU'S A DEMON?!


KEEP IT TOGETHER, KANTAROU... YOU JUST HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE AS FAST AS YOU CAN.
YOU'RE W-WELCOME. I'D BETTER BE GOING.
WAIT A MINUTE.
FOR ME?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
POPPY FLOWERS..?
THAT'S RIGHT.
DO YOU THINK IT SUITS ME?
THIS IS THE KIMONO YOU JUST BROUGHT.

MAYBE THE CHARM OF THIS FLOWER CAN CAPTURE THAT YOUKAI.
WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

HARUKA-CHAN!
WELL, HARUKA-SAN?
YOU WERE WONDERING WHY PEOPLE SUBMITTED TO THE SMOKE.
HOW IS IT FOR YOU?

MAYBE OPIUM DOESN'T WORK ON YOU.
MY--YOU CERTAINLY ARE COHERENT, CONSIDERING THAT DOSE YOU JUST TOOK
Haah...
I DID IT... NOW LET YOUKO GO!
Haah...
...LET YOUKO GO!
I SAID...
I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO DO THAT, HARUKA-SAN.
PRESI-DENT!

EVERY TIME YOU RESIST, YOUKO'S GETTING HURT.
YOU COWARDLY WITCH!
WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!
MMM.
...IS TO SEE YOUR BODY...
WHAT I WANT...
...WRITHING ON THE FLOOR.

STILL...IT'S STRANGE THAT SHE WOULDN'T HAVE ANY ADDED SECURITY AROUND HER STORE.
AND THE WAY SHOUKIKU JUST LET ME GO IS CONFUSING, TOO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE PRESIDENT SAKURAZAWA WAS ACTUALLY TRADING OPIUM!
THERE IT IS!
MAYBE THIS OEMONIC OPIUM WAS WHAT WAS CALLING ALL THE SPIRITS HERE.
SINCE IT WAS A YOUKAI I WAS DEALING WITH, NO WONDER THE HEIHAKU DIDN'T REACT.

I HAVE TO HURRY.
I HAVE TO GET TO THE MAIN MANSION BEFORE—
OW!
WHA...?
AAH!

YOU'RE KILLING HIM!
STOP IT!
YOU GAVE HIM 250 MG OF HEROIN?! THAT'S MORE THAN THE LETHAL DOSE!
HE'LL BE FINE.
AH...
THAT'S THE LETHAL DOSE FOR HUMANS.

AND THIS LITTLE BOY TOY...
...IS FAR FROM BEING HUMAN.
HE'S COMING! I KNOW HE IS!
THE MONSTER I PREPARED AT THE ENTRANCE IS STRONGER THAN ANYTHING HE'S EVER ENCOUNTERED I DOUBT YOUR "RARE YOUKAI BUSTER" STANDS A CHANCE FIGHTING ALONE
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH
K-KAN-CHAN!
YOU HAVE TO SAVE HARUKA-CHAN!

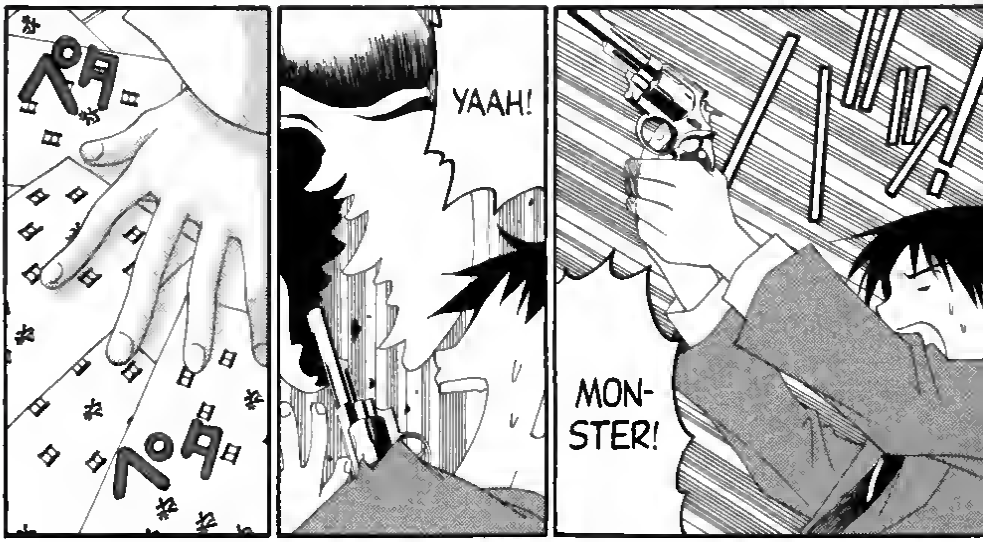
WHAT...
...ARE YOU REALLY AFTER?
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO KNOW?
HMPH.
klud
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY.
YOU'RE UNSIGHTLY AND USELESS.
THAT MAN DESIRES YOU.

I WOULD MUCH PREFER...
I HAVE FAR MORE RESPECT AND AFFECTION FOR HIM THAN YOU DO
SO WHY DOES HE WANT *YOU?*
...FOR YOU TO BE DEAD.
!!

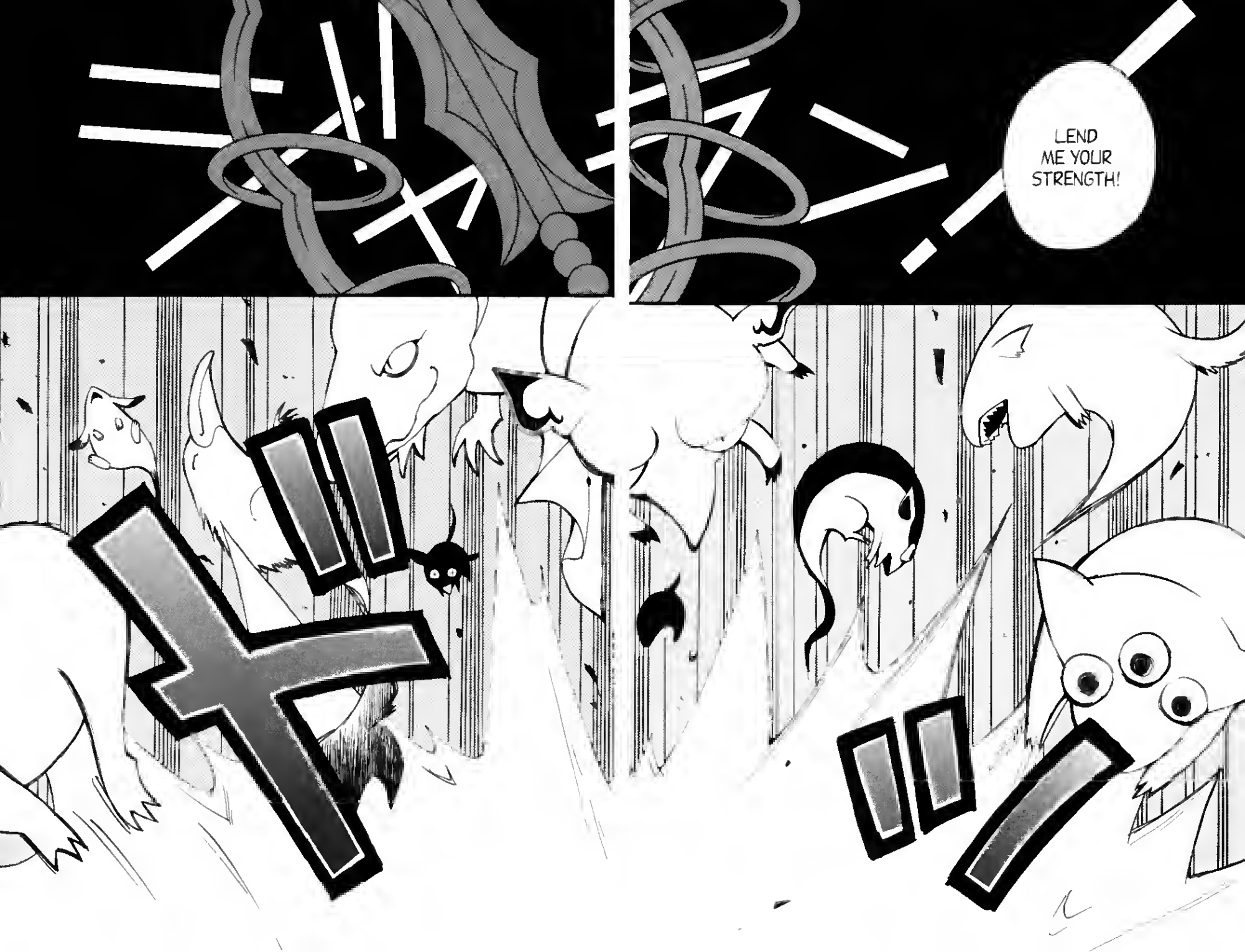
...NN.

A YOUKAI?!
WHAT'S IT DOING HERE?!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU, MADAME PRESIDENT.

I'M ESPECIALLY TALENTED..
...AT MAKING YOUKAI MY FRIENDS
Y-YOU'RE LATE... KANTAROU.


ペタ
ペタ
YAAH!
MON-
STER!

シャラン
シャラン
Monshaku-
joushou,
saibukudokugai
hotsubodaishin,
gushumangyou,
sokushoubodai.
Jamagedou
mouryoukishin
dokujuudokutyuu,
dokuchuushitui
I'M
SORRY.
EVERY-
ONE...


LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH!

GYAAAH!
WAAH!
YOUKO-CHAN!
HARUKA-CHAN! YOU HAVE TO HELP HARUKA-CHAN!
PRESIDENT SAKURA-ZAWA.
AAH!
DAMN.

SHUT UP, YOU--
AGH!
LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING
WHAT EXACTLY WERE YOU TRYING TO DO TO US?
!
PLEASE STOP PISSING ME OFF. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I MIGHT DO TO YOU.

HEY!
GYAAAH!

IT H-
HURTS...!
.....!
KAN-CHAN WHAT DO WE DO?!
WE'RE GOING HOME, YOUKO-CHAN
WE HAVE TO GET THESE DRUGS OUT OF HIS SYSTEM
HFF...
HFF...
I

ACHOO!
I'M FREEZING!
UGH.
I'M AS SICK AS A DOG.
MY HEAD HURTS. AND MY THROAT HURTS. AND MY BODY HURTS!

HMM.
RIGHT, KAN-CHAN?
YOU LIVE, YOU LEARN!
I CAN'T BELIEVE AN OVERDOSE OF NARCOTICS JUST GIVES THE DEMON-EATING TENGU A COLD.
IT EXPLAINS WHY I WAS ALWAYS SNEEZING IN THAT WOMAN'S ROOM.
I JUST NEVER GUESSED PRESIDENT SAKURAZAWA'S COMPANY WAS ACTUALLY SMUGGLING OPIUM.
I KNEW YOU'D SAVE US, KAN-CHAN.
ANYWAY... I'M GLAD WE'RE OKAY
THEY HAD AN ELABORATE PLAN SET UP FROM THE BEGINNING.

I THINK WE WERE BEING USED.
I-I'M SORRY, IBARAGI-SAMA.
CLINK
HUH?
I THINK YOU EARNED A LITTLE BREAK.
I UNDER ESTIMATED KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA NEXT TIME I'LL--
YOU MUST BE TIRED, SAKURA-ZAWA

HIROKO SAKURAZAWA RINGLEADER OF THE OPIUM SMUGGLING OPERATION...
YOU'RE BEING PUT UNDER IMMEDIATE ARREST.
RING-LEADER?!
I ONLY DID AS IBARAGI SAMA TOLD
OH DEAR SHE'S GONE MAD FROM ALL THAT OPIUM USE, MY GOOD SOLDIER
THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE. I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T TRUST HER TESTIMONY.
?!
YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE?

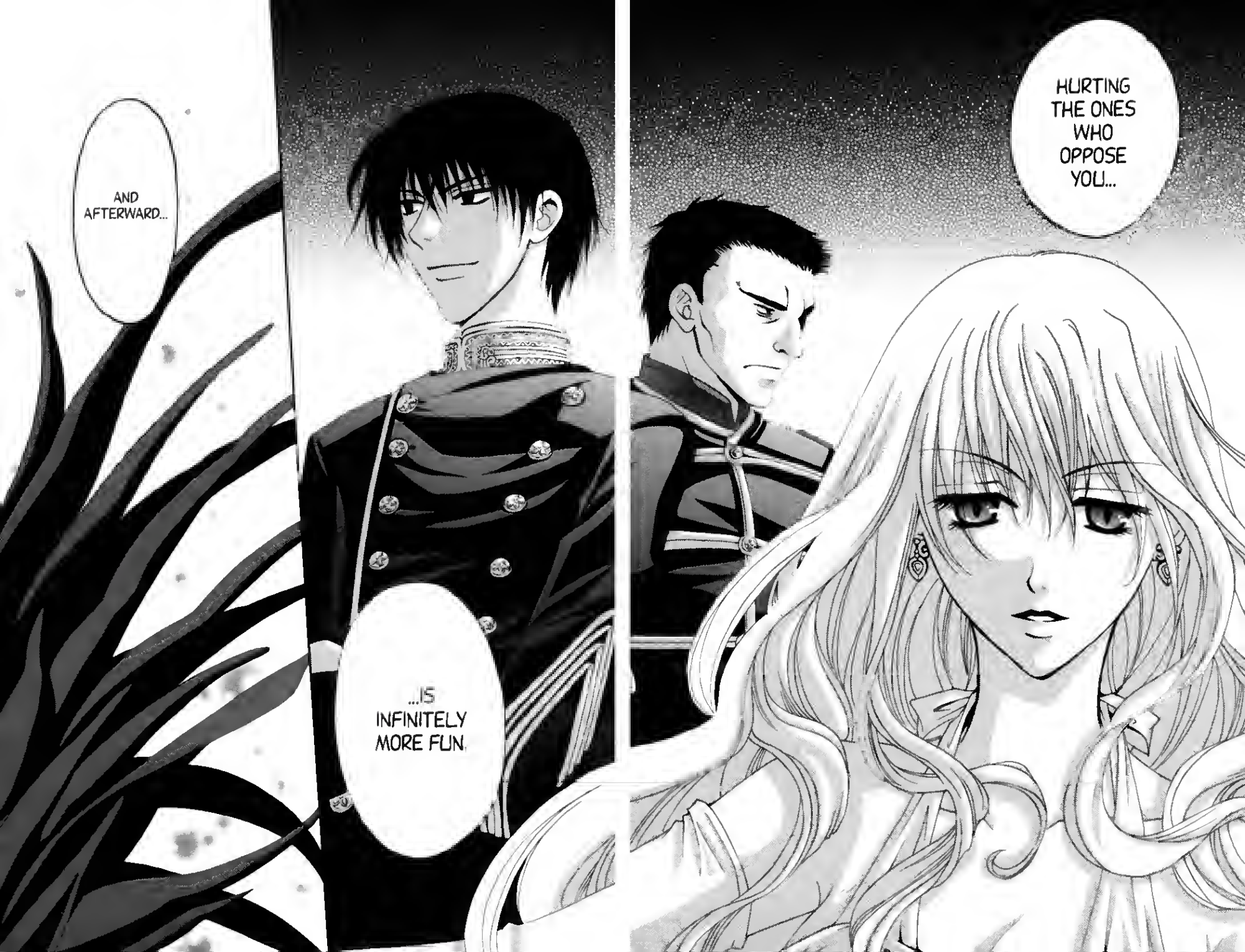
ENJOY YOUR ETERNAL BREAK...
...SAKURA-ZAWA.
HUMANS.
ESPECIALLY USELESS ONES.
YOU'RE A REAL BITCH, YOU KNOW THAT?

WELL, SUCKING ON A LITTLE BIT OF HONEY GOES A LONG WAY, DOES IT NOT?

YOU WERE MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN TORTURE, PULLING THE TAIL OFF THE LIZARD AND WHATNOT, THIS TIME AROUND

...TO PURPOSEFULLY GET CLOSE TO THAT GUY AND STRENGTHEN HIS SUSPICIONS?
WASN'T IT HARD...

I THOUGHT YOU LIKED THINGS THAT WAY.
PLEASE.


AND AFTERWARD...
...IS INFINITELY MORE FUN.
HURTING THE ONES WHO OPPOSE YOU...

THAT MAN SHALL RECEIVE THE DEMON-EATING TENGU AS A SACRIFICE.

THIS HISTORICAL SWORD WILL HELP ME EXPAND MY COLLECTION OF MEDALS.
YOU SHOULD THINK OF THIS AS AN HONOR.

CHAPTER 10

GOOD WORK, EVERYONE— YOU'VE MADE US SO HAPPY! WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OTHER CHARACTERS BE JUST AS GOOD SO WE CAN EXPERIENCE THIS AGAIN.

MUU-CHAN, BANZAAAI!
ICHIROU HOSHISOU-SAN DID SUGINO WHO WRITHES IN AGONY AT THE SIGHT OF MUU-CHAN
BANZAI YOURSELF, YOU BEAUTIFUL THING!

NYUM NYUM NYUM!
SOUND WHEN SHE'S EATING.
THEN THERE WAS OMI MINAMI-SAN AS MUU-CHAN...
WE ASSUME MUU-CHAN MADE THE REST OF THE STUDIO MELT, AS WELL.
It was sooo CUTE!

HIGASHIYAMA: THERE WAS A LOT INVOLVED IN THE FIRST SCENARIO, BUT IT WAS FUN. IT WOULD MAKE ME REALLY HAPPY IF WE GOT TO DO IT AGAIN. IT WOULD ALSO MAKE ME HAPPY IF EVERYONE LISTENED TO IT.
KINOSHITA: IT REALLY WAS QUITE AN ORDEAL. (BITTER SMILE)

SORRY THAT THIS AFTER-RECORDING REPORT JUST TURNED INTO ALL OF OUR FANGIRL IMPRESSIONS!

THE END

HMPH. THAT WASN'T ENOUGH.
WHAT A BORE.
I HOPE I CAN ASK YOU TO TAKE THINGS FROM HERE
AS PER THE USUAL, WATANABE.
AS YOU WISH.

臨・兵
Rin pyou
闘・者
TOU SHA
皆・陣・裂
Kai Jin Retsu
在
zai
前ー!?
sen?!
ガラ
ガラ
NOT AGAIN OUR POOR HOUSE
WHY ARE YOU BEING SO DIFFICULT, HARUKA?!
DID YOU FORGET EVERYTHING YOU JUST WENT THROUGH? SOMEONE'S TARGETING YOU!

I DON'T CARE IF I'M BEING TARGETED!
IT'S LESS AGGRAVATING THAN HAVING YOU IN MY BUSINESS EVERY MINUTE!

SILENCE, BOTH OF YOU!

I KNOW THAT.
Hot! Scalding face!

LISTEN HARUKA-CHAN I COMPLETELY AGREE THAT BEING LOCKED IN SUCKS BUT KAN-CHAN'S GOT A POINT

..ANYWAY YOU JUST LACK *PRUDENCE*, HARUKA--AND YOU'RE AWFUL AT SENSING DANGER.
しとぴ
I'M NOT LOCKING YOU IN THE HOUSE BECAUSE I WANT TO, YOU KNOW
しとぴ
しとぴ
NO, HARUKA.
IT'S NOT JUST THAT.
NO!
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF IF I'M ALONE--
THE LAST INCIDENT WAS AN EXCEPTION, SINCE I COULDN'T FIGHT BACK WHEN THEY TOOK YOUKO
WAIT.
THEN MAYBE YOU COULD TAKE HARUKA-CHAN FOR A WALK OR SOMETHING KAN-CHAN
KANTAROU, YOU...
KAN-CHAN?

WHA?
...YOU STINK!
NNGH-- MY GAG REFLEX!

HUH? REALLY? BUT I TOOK A BATH LAST NIGHT.
I CAN'T STINK THAT BAD--

SMELLS LIKE GINKO FRUIT IN THE FALL.
OH. NICE.

MOYASHI-KUN, SAY HELLO
YOU CAN'T BE SHY FOREVER.
ER... HI.

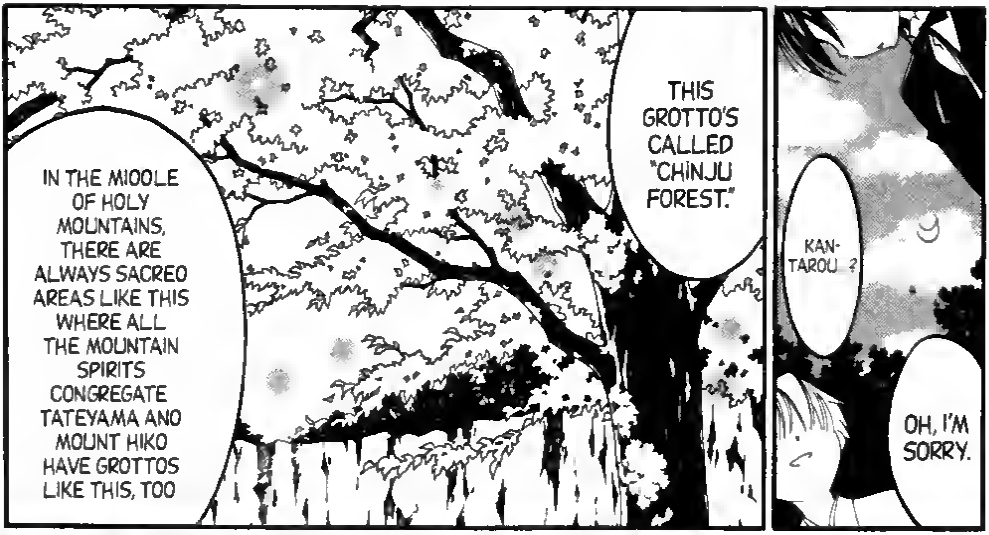
OH! IF IT ISN'T MOYASHI-KUN. LONG TIME NO SEE!
HOW BRAVE OF YOU TO COME ALL THE WAY HERE BY YOURSELF.

CAN YOU GO OUT FASTER?
I'M HAPPY, BUT ALSO SAD. I DON'T WANT TO CARRY HIM.
YOU CAN COME OUT WITH US NOW, HARUKA. WINGS, PLEASE

THAT'S SERIOUS, MOYASHI-KUN.
REALLY?!
IS THAT RIGHT?
MOYAAN! MOYAAAAH!

HERE WE ARE! IT'S SO MUCH FASTER TRAVELING VIA HARUKA.
WHY DOESN'T THAT SMELL BOTHER YOU, KANTAROU?

KANTAROU. THIS PLACE IS...


IN THE MIDDLE OF HOLY MOUNTAINS, THERE ARE ALWAYS SACRED AREAS LIKE THIS WHERE ALL THE MOUNTAIN SPIRITS CONGREGATE TATEYAMA AND MOUNT HIKO HAVE GROTTOS LIKE THIS, TOO
THIS GROTTO'S CALLED "CHINJU FOREST."
KAN-TAROU ?
OH, I'M SORRY.

!

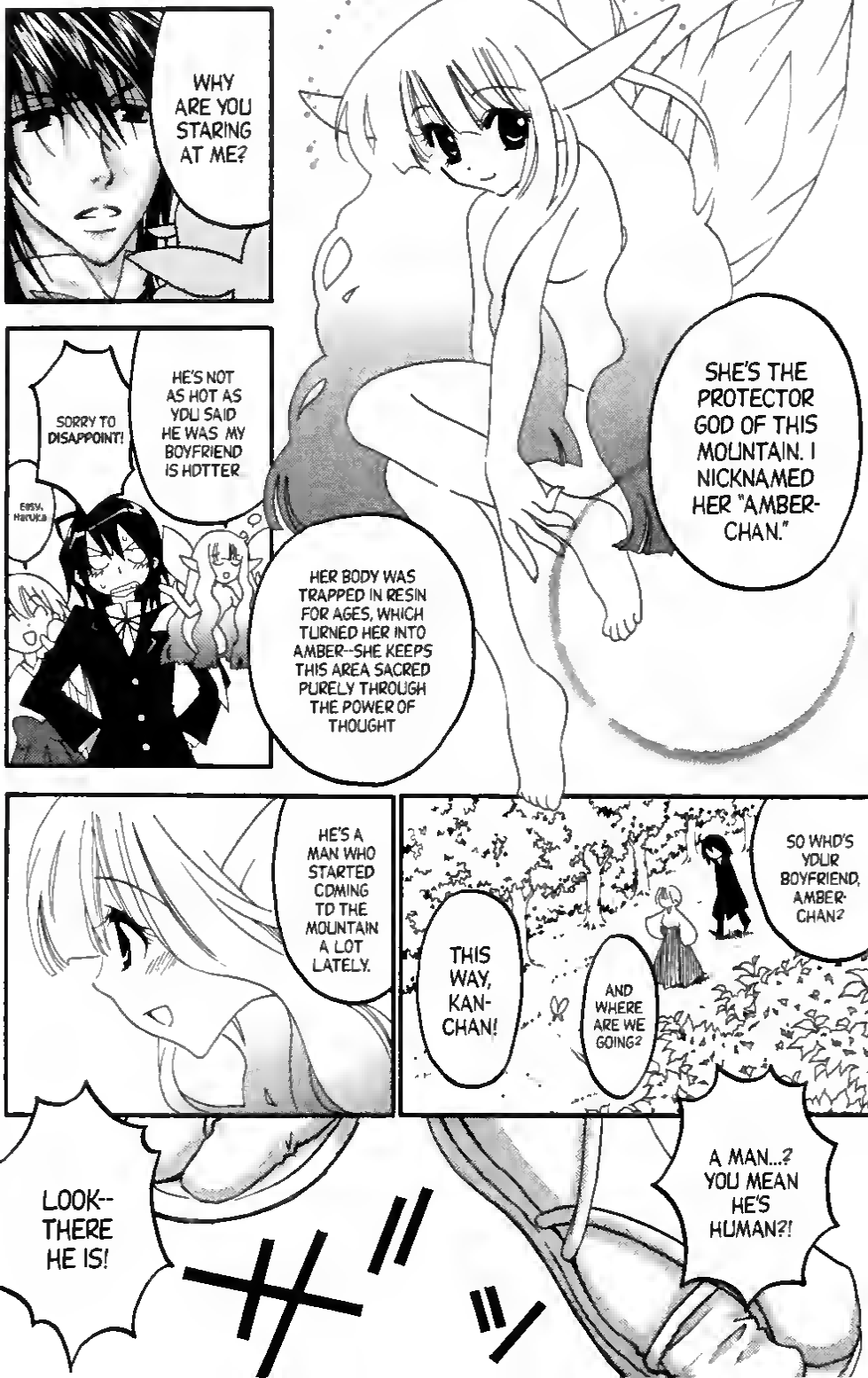
...RIGHT.

CAN YOU FEEL THE BREATH OF THE MOUNTAIN SPIRITS, HARUKA?
SOMETIMES I COME HERE TO UP MY SPIRITUAL ENERGY

ニャリ

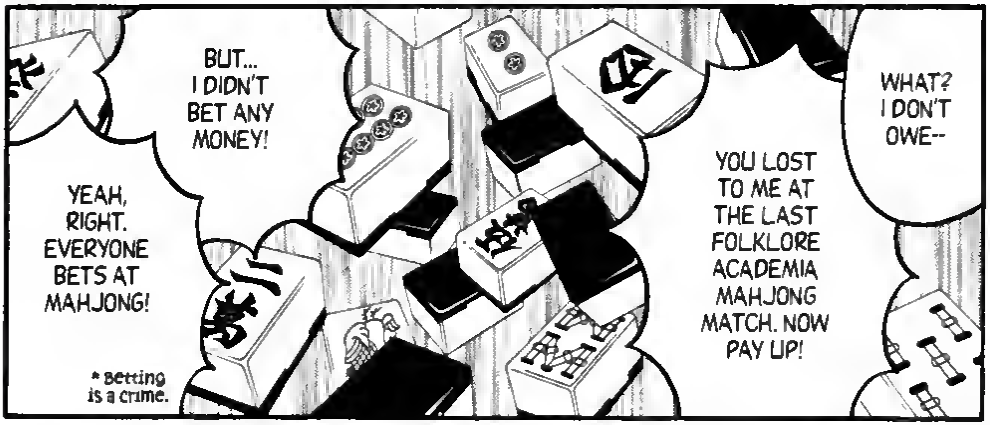
AMBER...?
NO TOUCHING!
Tee Hee!
THAT TICKLES!
HUH?

OH, I SO KNOW! I HEARD FROM MOYASHI-KUN!
squeak!
squeal!
I MISSED YOU SO MUCH! I HAVE SOOO MUCH TO TELL YOU!
HEY, AMBER-CHAN!
KAN-CHAN!
EEEK!
...YOU'VE FALLEN IN LOVE.
HE TOLD ME...
Moyaaah!
sigh...
WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY SCREAMING ABOUT?
OW!
SWAT SWAT
Squeee!!
AW, NO FAIR! I CAME TO HEAR THE SCOOP FROM YOU!
OOOH, YOU! KAN-CHAN, YOU CAD!

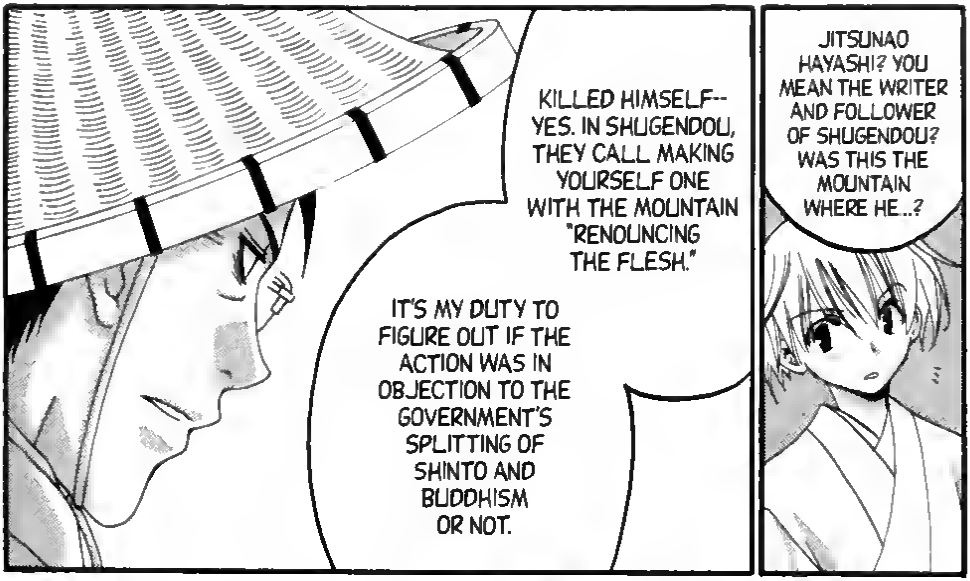

WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME?
SHE'S THE PROTECTOR GOD OF THIS MOUNTAIN. I NICKNAMED HER "AMBER-CHAN."
HE'S NOT AS HOT AS YOU SAID HE WAS MY BOYFRIEND IS HOTTER
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT!
EHSV. Haruka
HER BODY WAS TRAPPED IN RESIN FOR AGES, WHICH TURNED HER INTO AMBER--SHE KEEPS THIS AREA SACRED PURELY THROUGH THE POWER OF THOUGHT
HE'S A MAN WHO STARTED COMING TO THE MOUNTAIN A LOT LATELY.
SO WHO'S YOUR BOYFRIEND, AMBER-CHAN?
THIS WAY, KAN-CHAN!
AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?
A MAN...? YOU MEAN HE'S HUMAN?!
LOOK-- THERE HE IS!

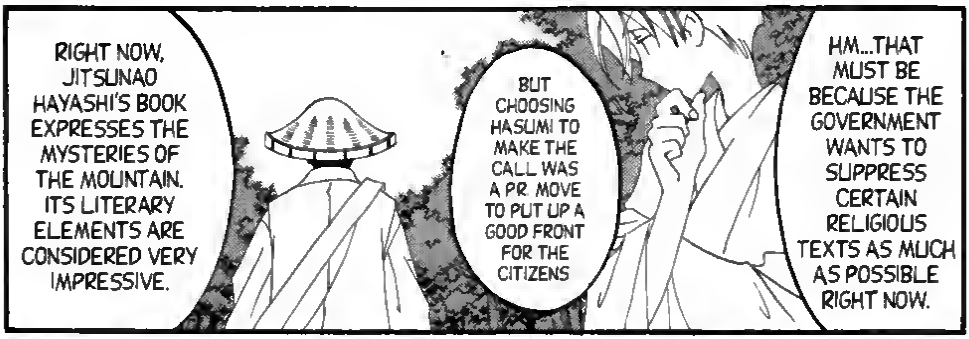
HASUMI?!
ICHINO-MIYA?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
AMBER-CHAN! OF ALL THE GUYS IN THE WORLD, YOU SETTLED FOR HIM?!
ICHINOMIYA? WHY ARE YOU TALKING TO YOURSELF?
OH RIGHT... YOU CAN'T SEE CREATURES OF MYTH
WHERE'S YOUR GIRL? ER... ROSALIE
I LEFT HER WITH MY APPRENTICE TODAY.
HE DRAGGED YOU HERE, HARUKA-KUN?
YOU POOR THING

YOU OWE ME MONEY!


BUT... I DIDN'T BET ANY MONEY!
YEAH, RIGHT. EVERYONE BETS AT MAHJONG!
* Betting is a crime.
YOU LOST TO ME AT THE LAST FOLKLORE ACADEMIA MAHJONG MATCH. NOW PAY UP!
WHAT? I DON'T OWE--

I TOOK A REQUEST FROM THE GOVERNMENT
I'M FOLLOWING THE TRACKS OF JITSUNAO HAYASHI
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, HASUMI?
I'M A REGULAR AT THIS MOUNTAIN
SEE? HE'S EVEN POOR DROP THE DUD
PUTTING ASIDE YOUR INSANITY.. WHAT ARE YOU UP TO THESE DAYS?

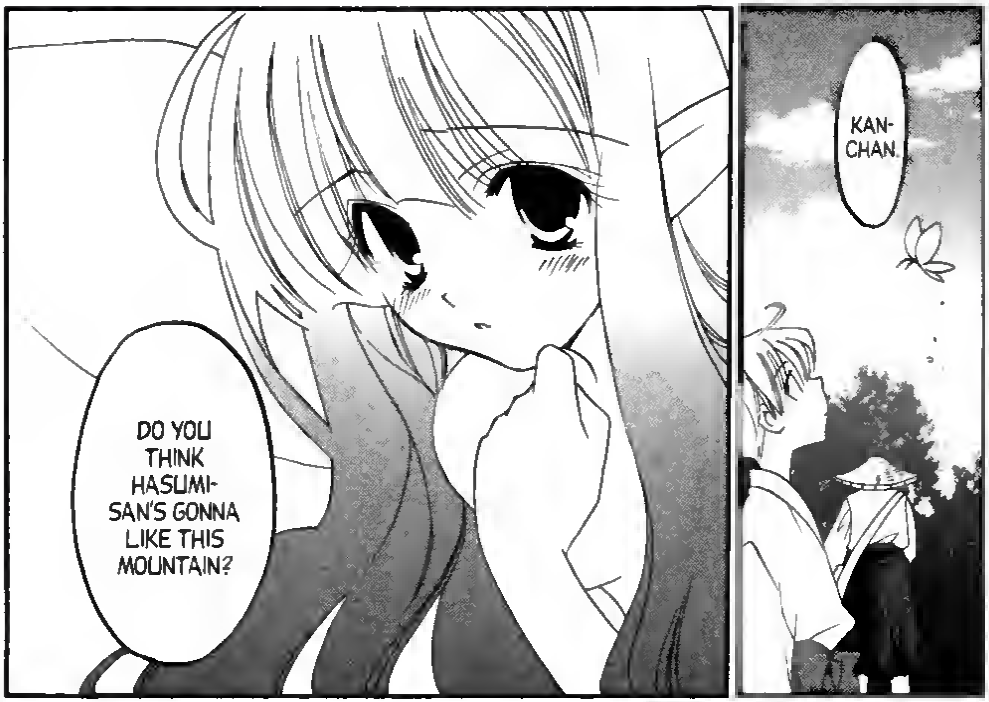

KILLED HIMSELF--YES. IN SHUGENDOU, THEY CALL MAKING YOURSELF ONE WITH THE MOUNTAIN "RENOUNCING THE FLESH."
IT'S MY DUTY TO FIGURE OUT IF THE ACTION WAS IN OBJECTION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SPLITTING OF SHINTO AND BUDDHISM OR NOT.
JITSUNAO HAYASHI? YOU MEAN THE WRITER AND FOLLOWER OF SHUGENDOU? WAS THIS THE MOUNTAIN WHERE HE...?


RIGHT NOW, JITSUNAO HAYASHI'S BOOK EXPRESSES THE MYSTERIES OF THE MOUNTAIN. ITS LITERARY ELEMENTS ARE CONSIDERED VERY IMPRESSIVE.
BUT CHOOSING HASUMI TO MAKE THE CALL WAS A PR MOVE TO PUT UP A GOOD FRONT FOR THE CITIZENS
HM...THAT MUST BE BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO SUPPRESS CERTAIN RELIGIOUS TEXTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW.

I HAVE TO FIND CHINJYU FOREST AND THE WATERFALL THAT HE THREW HIMSELF OFF OF.
HE WROTE THAT THIS MOUNTAIN WAS THE GROUNDS FOR HIS TRAINING.

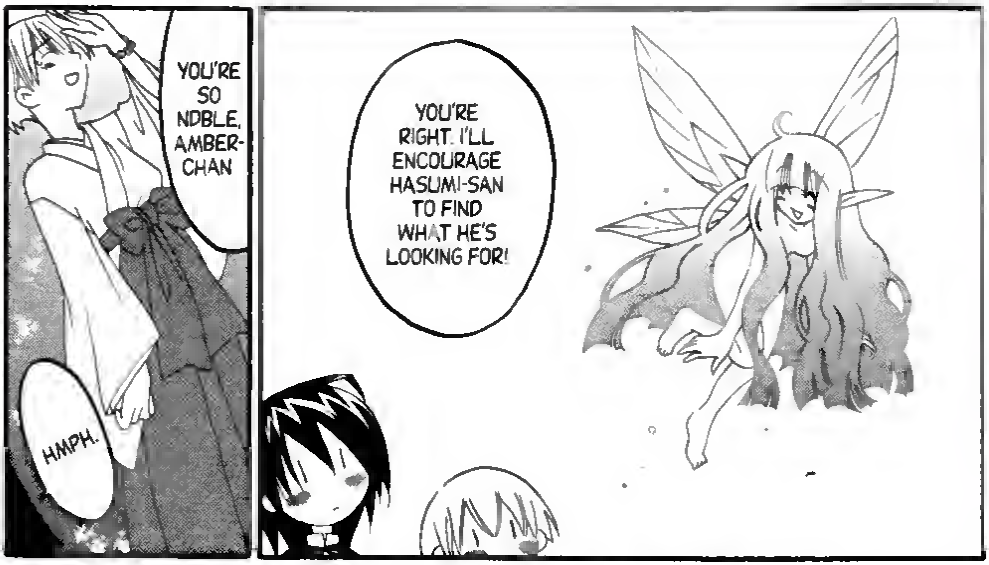
.....
IT'S MAOE TO BE LIKE THAT.
SACRED GROUND ISN'T EASY TO GET INTO, HASUMI.

GET READY FOR A CHALLENGE
IF YOUR RELIGIOUS PIETY GROWS EVEN A LITTLE WHILE YOU'RE UP HERE, YOU SHOULD TELL THAT BLOCKHEAD GOVERNMENT AS MUCH.
A DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE ISN'T ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND A BELIEVER'S FEELINGS
SO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS PIETY?
GET OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE, ICHINOMIYA



MOUNTAINS ARE MADE TO BE FEARED-- AND NATURE, TO BE SEEN AS SOMETHING MIRACULOUS.

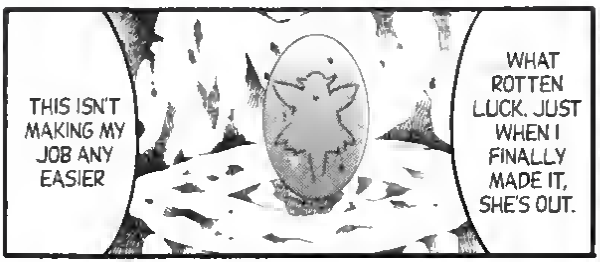
PLACES LIKE THIS ACT AS A TINY REMINDER TO PEOPLE AS THEY GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES THAT THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE LARGER THAN THEY ARE


YOU'RE SO NOBLE, AMBER-CHAN
HMPH.
YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL ENCOURAGE HASUMI-SAN TO FIND WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR!

I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE CASE, ACTUALLY.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS THEY'RE YOUKAI AND HUMAN THEY'LL NEVER BE COMPATIBLE. WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL HER THAT?
SHE'S ONLY GOING TO GET HURT.
SOMETHING WRONG, HARUKA?

'TIS BETTER TO HAVE LOVED AND LOST THAN NEVER TO HAVE LOVED AT ALL.
I WANT TO ENCOURAGE SOMETHING.
THAT'S OPTIMISTIC...
KANTARŌU.

EEK! HASUMI-SAN!
YAAAAAAAAAAAAH!
I TOLD YOU THE GROUND THERE WAS UNSTABLE.
IF YOU WANT THE WATERFALL, YOU SHOULD GO THAT WAY!
TIME TO TRY AGAIN.
NOOO!
WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE ENCOUR-AGING HIM?
What if he dies?
PFFT! NYUK NYUK NYUK.
ゴロン ゴロン ゴロン


THIS ISN'T MAKING MY JOB ANY EASIER
WHAT ROTTEN LUCK. JUST WHEN I FINALLY MADE IT, SHE'S OUT.

I SHOULDN'T BE ON THIS WILD-GOOSE CHASE, ANYWAY--I'D RATHER BE HUSHING UP THAT BOOK.
...HM?

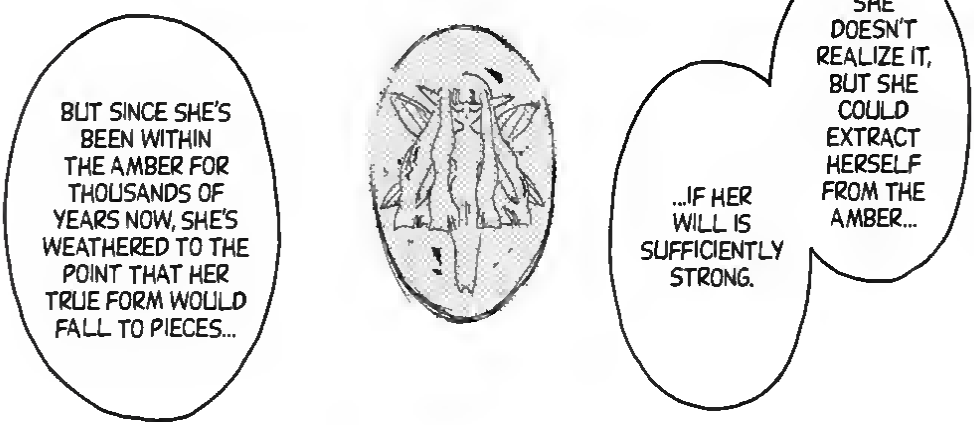
WELL, WELL, WELL.
NOW THIS *IS* SOMETHING.

WATER-FALL... FOREST...!
WHERE...
AND I REFUSE TO LET HIM LAUGH AT ME.
HUFF HUFF
DAMMIT. IF I GIVE UP, I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT
ICHINOMIYA IS THE LAST PERSON WHO NEEDS BRAGGING RIGHTS!
CAN WE GO HOME YET?
HASUMI-SAN...
OOH! HOW BRAVE HASUMI!

GYAAAH!
ズボボ
ズル
ズル

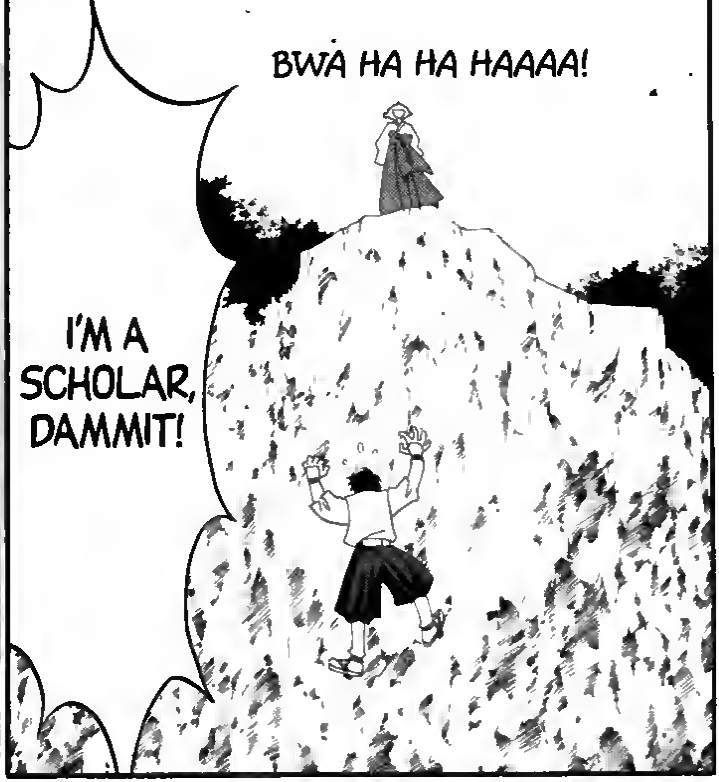
IF I WERE IN MY REAL FORM...
...I'D BE ABLE TO HELP HIM.

KEEP IT DOWN, HARUKA! SHE MIGHT HEAR YOU!
SO WHAT?!
.....
KANTAROU, CAN'T YOU USE YOUR POWERS TO HELP HER WITH THAT?


BUT SINCE SHE'S BEEN WITHIN THE AMBER FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS NOW, SHE'S WEATHERED TO THE POINT THAT HER TRUE FORM WOULD FALL TO PIECES...
...IF HER WILL IS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG.
SHE DOESN'T REALIZE IT, BUT SHE COULD EXTRACT HERSELF FROM THE AMBER...

I GUESS I'VE GOT NO CHOICE, HASUMI
COME ON-- I'LL SHOW YOU THE WAY TO THE WATERFALL.
ICHINOMIYA ...
IN EXCHANGE, GIVE ME THE MAHJONG MONEY--
スパーンッ
I TOLD YOU, I DIDN'T BET ANYTHING!
FINE! THEN IF MY FEE IS NADA, YOU GET THE FREE ROUTE.
"FREE"?

THERE'S A MUCH EASIER PATH OVER--
YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. HUSH.


BWA HA HA HAAAA!
I'M A SCHOLAR, DAMMIT!

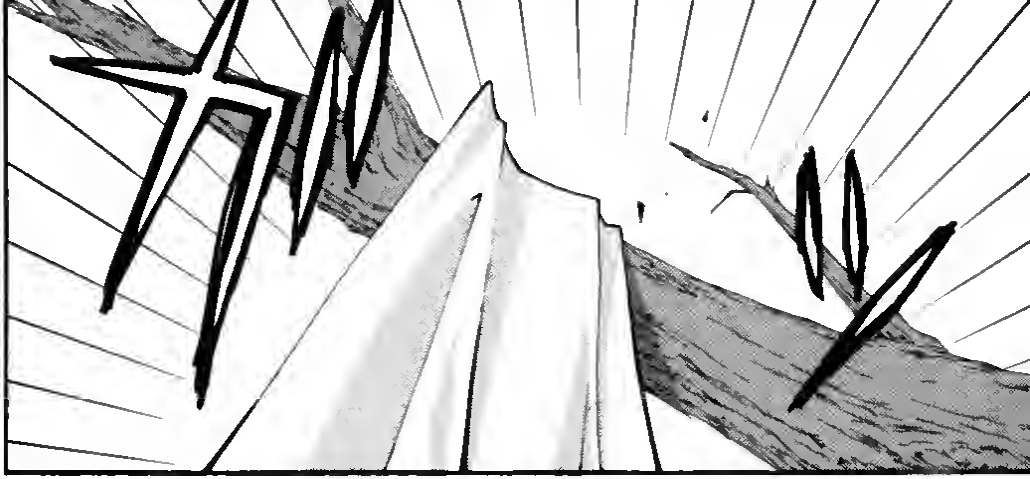
HMM...
STUPID ICHINOMIYA... NOW HE'S JUST BEING A JERK!
ONE DAY I'M GOING TO--

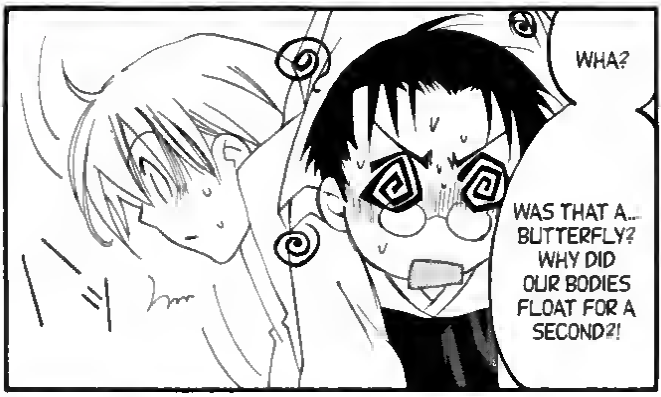
THAT'S THE WATERFALL WHERE JITSUNAO HAYASHI RELINQUISHED HIS CORPOREAL FORM, HASUMI
I SEE...
HASUMI-SAN..
WELL, HASUMI? DID WE LEARN ANYTHING?
I NEED THE CHINJU FOREST NEXT. LEAD THE WAY, ICHINOMIYA.
DON'T YOU DARE TALK DOWN TO ME!
It ticks me off!
Not cute!
AND I ALREADY TOLD YOU I'LL TELL YOU THE WAY IF YOU GIVE ME MY MONEY!
WOULD YOU JUST DROP IT? I DON'T OWE YOU A COIN!

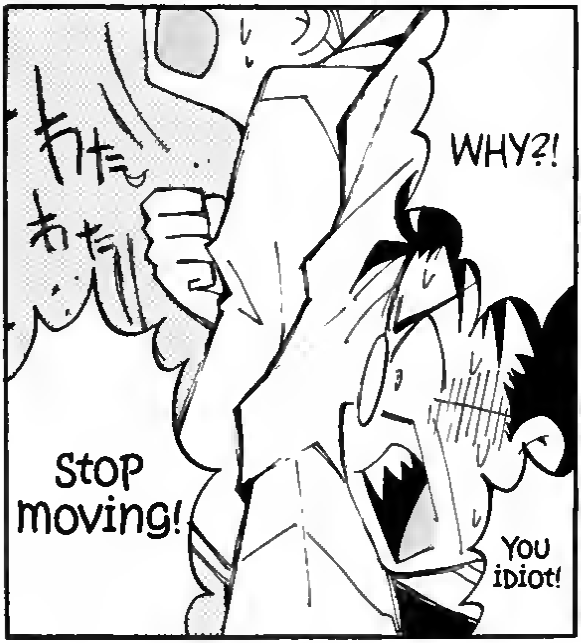
WHAT WAS THAT?
...WATCH IT, KANTAROU.
WAAAH!
HARUKAAAA! You have to give warnings in a timely fashion!!
I TRIED TO.
.....

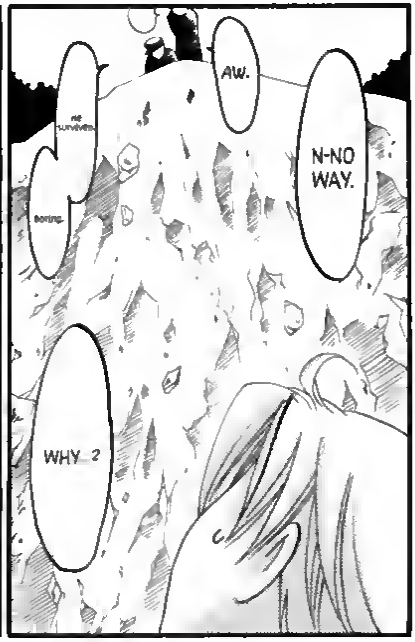
NOW, I MUST SAY YOU'VE PIQUED MY CURIOSITY.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SAVE YOUR MASTER?
DEMON-EATING TENGU.
DON'T PROVOKE ME.
YOU'RE THE ONE ON SHAKY GROUND RIGHT NOW

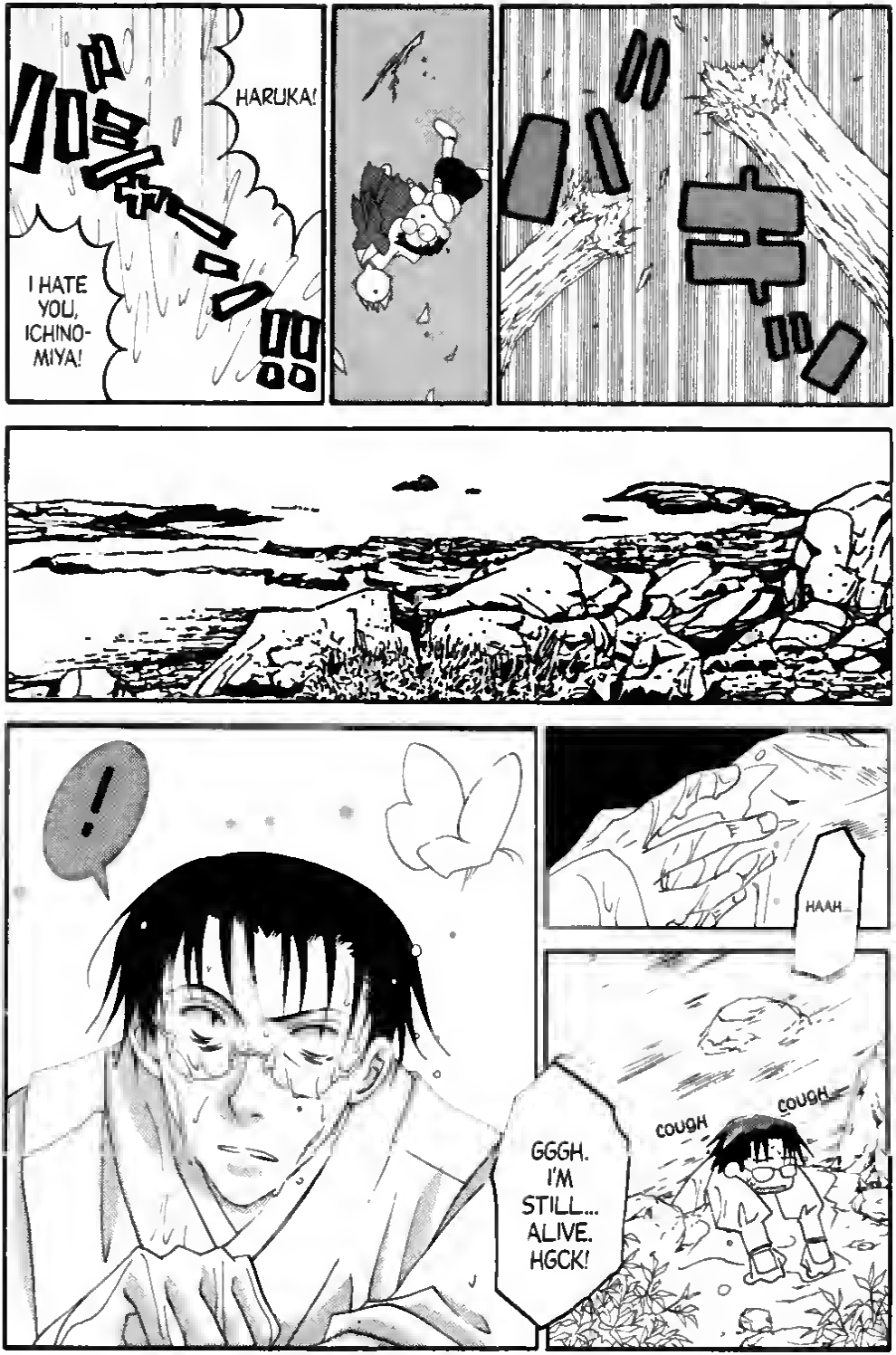
OH, OF ALL THE PEOPLE TO DOUBLE-SUICIDE WITH!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE EITHER!
!
AMBER-CHAN!
HUH?!




WHA?
WAS THAT A... BUTTERFLY? WHY DID OUR BODIES FLOAT FOR A SECOND?!


WHY?!
Stop moving!
YOU idiot!


AW.
N-NO WAY.
WHY...?


HARUKA!
I HATE YOU, ICHINO-MIYA!
!
HAAH...
COUGH
COUGH
GGGH. I'M STILL... ALIVE. HGCK!

IT'S THAT BUTTERFLY AGAIN.
IF YOU'RE HERE TO START A FIGHT, WHY WON'T YOU DRAW YOUR SWORD?

YOU WANT ME TO DRAW IT?
FINE-- I CAN DRAW IT.
I DON'T LIKE TO DISPLAY IT CASUALLY.
BUT IT'S A PRECIOUS BLADE, YOU SEE. ONE OF OUTSTANDING PEDIGREE.

...THE DOUJIGIRI-YASUTSUNA!

MY NAME IS RAIKOU MINAMOTO
I'M AN OFFICIALLY-RECOGNIZED YOUKAI EXTERMINATOR OF THE GREAT NATION OF JAPAN.
YOU?
THE HEAD OF THE MINAMOTO FAMILY IS YOUNG THIS GENERATION.
MAYBE I AM BUT I'M STILL IN CHARGE AND MY FAMILY IS STILL ENTRUSTED WITH EXTERMINATING YOUKAI ON BEHALF OF THE NATION AS WE'VE DONE FOR ALMOST A MILLENNIA.
I'M HERE TO FIX THEIR MISTAKE.
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE MY ANCESTORS COULDN'T BRING DOWN.

HA HA HA! THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MY DEFENSES HAVE BEEN PENETRATED THIS DEEPLY
YOU'RE EVERYTHING I EXPECTED YOU TO BE

THIS WON'T BE ANY FUN IF YOU DON'T.
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
BUT STILL... I KNOW YOU'RE STRONGER THAN THIS SHOW ME YOUR TRUE SELF
HMM.
I missed?
COME AT ME WITH YOUR FULL POWER!
I'LL SHOW YOU MINE IF YOU SHOW ME YOURS!

PLIP
I'M AFRAID NOT.

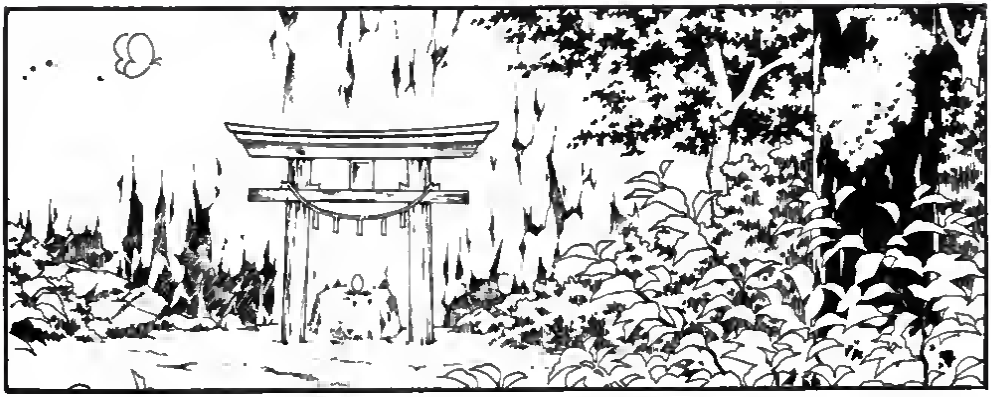
...GET OUT OF MY WAY.
HURRY UP AND MOVE! DO YOU WANT TO LOSE YOUR ARM?!
I CAN GUARANTEE HE WON'T.
HE'S HERE TO PROTECT ME.

MY ARM CAN ONLY BE TAKEN BY THE "KOUSHIN-EYED DEMON-EATING TENGU"
I WANTED TO SEE THE KOUSHIN-EYED TENGU.
Aw, man...

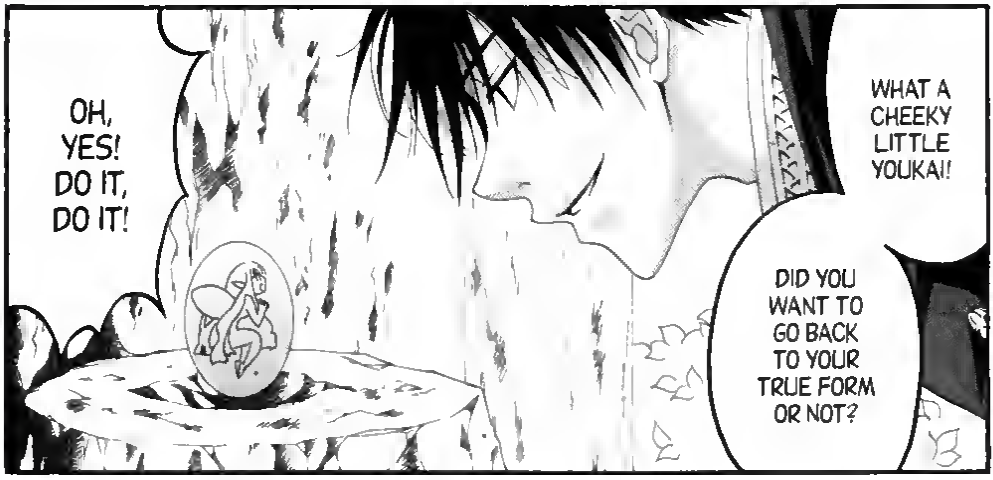
W-WAIT!
THIS ISN'T FUN ANYMORE I'M GOING HOME.
ピチン
...HUNH. WE HAVE AN INTRUDER.

I WAS HOPING I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BUMP INTO YOU.
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY.

I WON'T LET YOU GET IN MY WAY NEXT TIME.
YOU'RE IN THE WAY, YOU DIRTY LITTLE BRAT.



MY CRUSH IS GONNA BE HERE ANY MINUTE, SO COULD YOU JUST GO AWAY?
OH GREAT. NOT YOU AGAIN
I HATE WAITING.
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GOT BACK


OH, YES! DO IT, DO IT!
WHAT A CHEEKY LITTLE YOUKAI!
DID YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR TRUE FORM OR NOT?

I WASN'T KIDDING WHEN I SAID HAYASHI'S SUPERNATURAL POWERS WERE WHY HE WAS TAKEN IN BY YOU. THAT DOESN'T WORK WITH NORMAL PEOPLE
HMPH YOU'RE A NAUGHTY SPIRIT--BUT CUNNING AS EVER
IT'S JUST LIKE YOU SAID. IF I DON'T GO BACK TO MY ORIGINAL FORM...
...IT'LL BE THE SAME AS WITH THAT LAST GUY, AND HASUMI-SAMA WON'T EVER FALL FOR ME.
BUT EITHER WAY...
...TAKE MY HAND.
EVOLVE.
DON'T STOP.

I WILL GRANT YOUR WISH.

IS THIS...
...THE CHINJU FOREST?
THERE'S SOMETHING VERY LONELY ABOUT IT.
THE WATERFALL DID TOUCH MY HEART, IN A WAY. BUT THIS PLACE...

IT MAKES ME FEEL...SAD, FOR SOME REASON.

トス!
THAT HASUMI'S ABOUT AS SHARP AS A MARBLE.
UGH! OF ALL THE THICK-HEADED...
HASUMI-SAN'S THICK SKULL IS WHY THAT POOR LITTLE SPIRIT CAN'T EVER HOOK UP WITH HIM.
NOW HAYASHI'S BOOK'S BEEN OUTLAWED!
...BUT HOW COULD HE HAVE GONE TO CHINJU AND STILL NOT FELT ANYTHING?
I KNOW WE SKIPPED THE FOREST IN FAVOR OF LEAVING THE MOUNTAIN AFTER THE FIGHT
AND SPEAKING OF HOT YOUKAI. WHERE'S HARUKA?
WHATEVER NEXT TIME I GO, I'LL INTRODUCE HER TO A *REALLY* HOT YOUKAI!
I WONDER IF AMBER-CHAN'S DEPRESSED.

EH. I THOUGHT HIM GETTING OUT OF THIS PLACE WAS GONNA CHEER HIM UP, BUT NOW HE'S JUST MOPING IN HIS ROOM.
I'LL GO CHECK ON HIM, THEN.
YOU'RE SO PERKY SINCE YOU CAME BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN KAN-CHAN. DID YOU RECHARGE UP THERE?
YEAH. A GOOD LOOK AT THE ENEMY ALWAYS GETS MY JUICES FLOWING.
...ENEMY?
HAAA-RUKA!
tmp
tmp

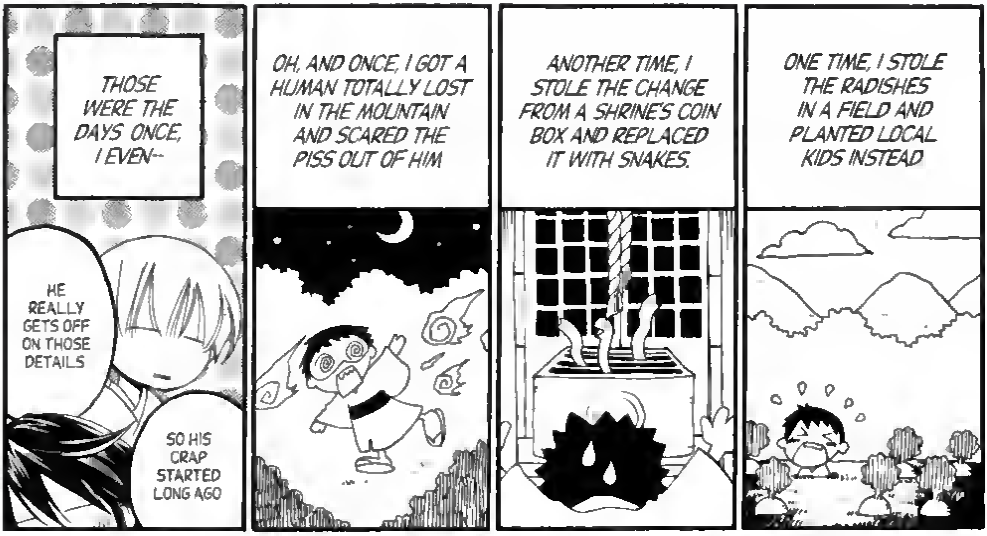
MY SHAKUJYOU
HE DESTROYED IT.
HOW ABOUT A WALK?
CHEER UP, OR YOU'LL START TO PISS OFF YOUKO-CHAN.
OW! THAT HURT!
EHE?
AND AT LEAST NOW WE KNOW WHO OUR ENEMY IS
BRING IT OUT. LET'S GO
JUST SCATTER SOME FEATHERS AND YOU'LL GET ANOTHER ONE RIGHT?
STILL... I DO WISH WE WERE UP AGAINST SOMEONE LESS ANNOYING

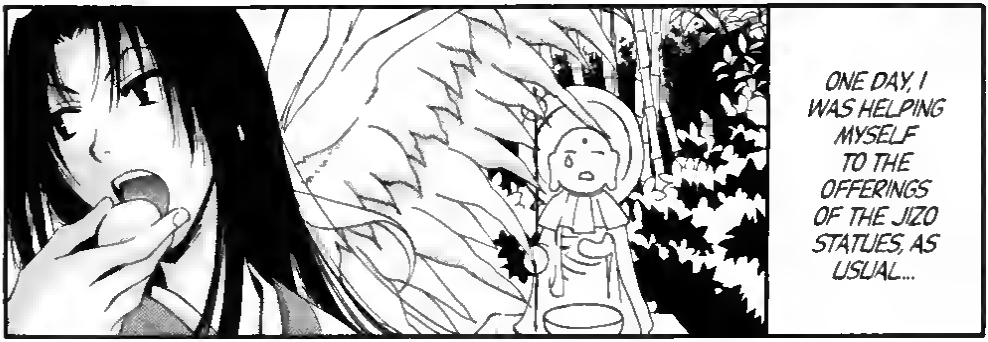
BONUS STORY PART I

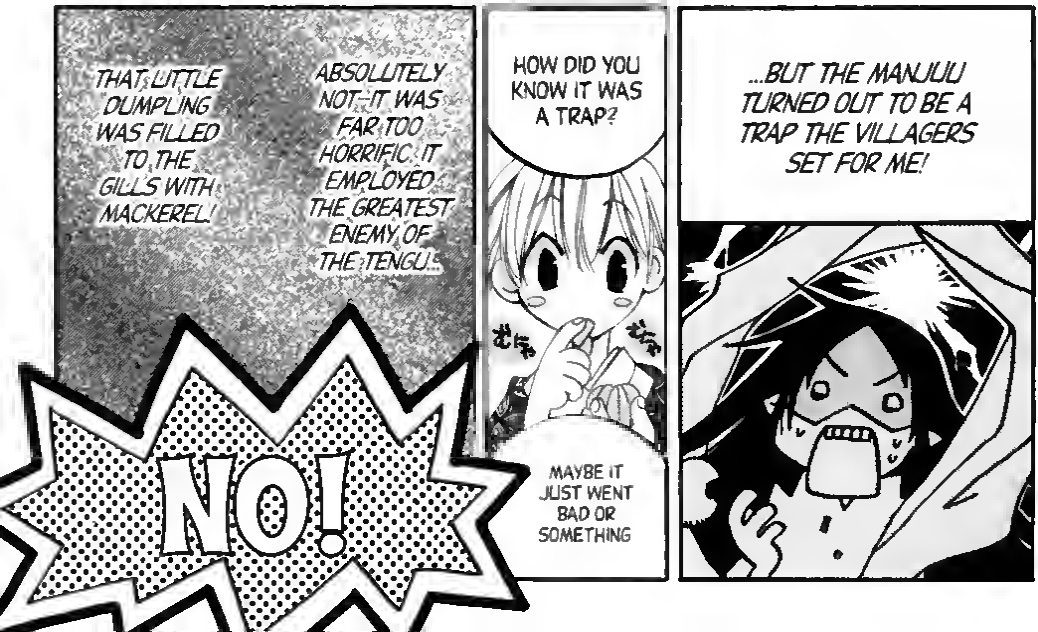
tactics

ARE YOU STILL CARRYING AROUND THAT DISGUSTING TEA BOWL, DEMON EATER?
SSSIP
I WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD.
I'M A PART OF THE NEW GENERATION OF TENGU-- I'VE TOSSED A LOT OF THE OLD TRADITIONS.
HM? SUGINO-SAMA, YOU DON'T CARRY A TENGU TEA BOWL WITH YOU?
SHUT IT, SUGINO. WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE? GO BACK TO YOUR MOUNTAIN.

AN AUDIENCE! HA HA HA!
DON'T START WITH HIM KANTAROU.
COME ON, HARUKA... AREN'T YOU CURIOUS?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD STORY.
HOW DID YOU AND MUU-CHAN MEET, SUGINO SAMA?
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MUU-CHAN?
AFTER I MET MUU-CHAN, I CHANGED.
YOU'RE AN IDIOT.
IT WAS BACK WHEN DEMON EATER WAS GONE AND I WASN'T THE GOD OF SUGINO VILLAGE YET.
I WAS TRAVELING ALONE, GROWING WILDER BY THE DAY AND CAUSING TROUBLE FROM ONE MOUNTAIN TO THE NEXT.
I FINALLY EARNED THE NAME "THE REBEL TENGU!"
PTOOIE
YOU WERE A DELINQUENT?


THOSE WERE THE DAYS ONCE, I EVEN--
HE REALLY GETS OFF ON THOSE DETAILS
SO HIS CRAP STARTED LONG AGO
OH, AND ONCE, I GOT A HUMAN TOTALLY LOST IN THE MOUNTAIN AND SCARED THE PISS OUT OF HIM
ANOTHER TIME, I STOLE THE CHANGE FROM A SHRINE'S COIN BOX AND REPLACED IT WITH SNAKES.
ONE TIME, I STOLE THE RADISHES IN A FIELD AND PLANTED LOCAL KIDS INSTEAD

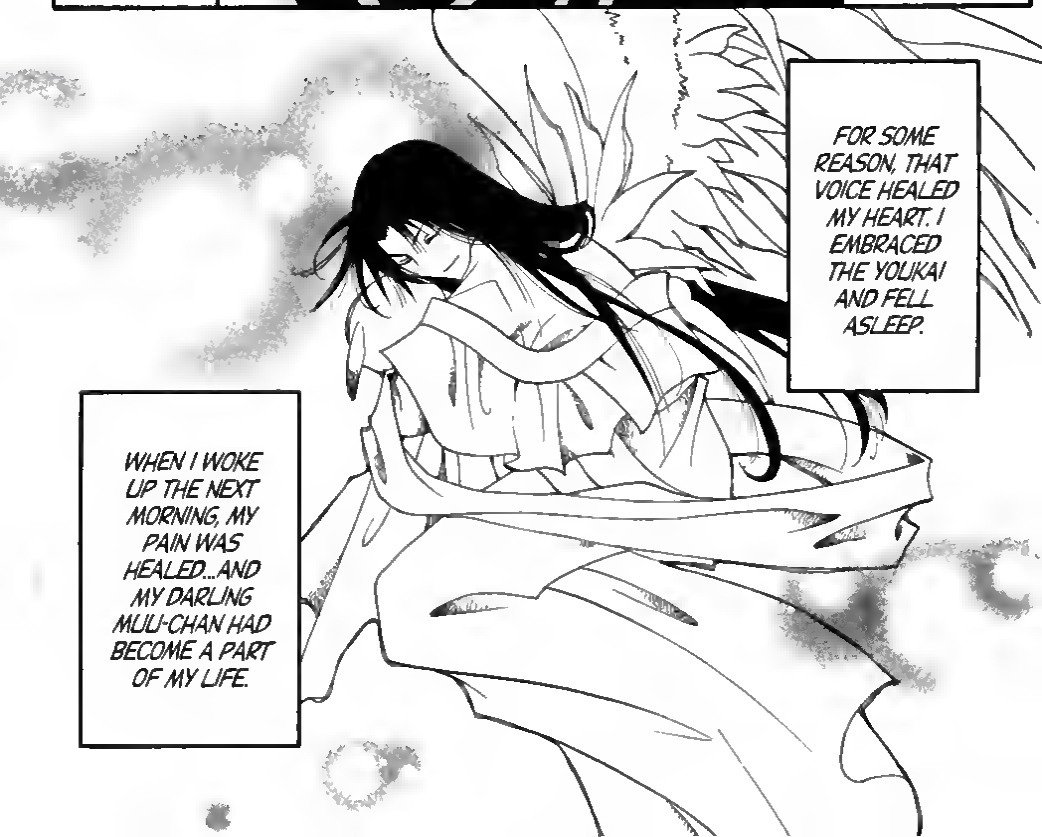

ONE DAY, I WAS HELPING MYSELF TO THE OFFERINGS OF THE JIZO STATUES, AS USUAL...


...BUT THE MANJUU TURNED OUT TO BE A TRAP THE VILLAGERS SET FOR ME!
HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS A TRAP?
むぐ
むぐ
MAYBE IT JUST WENT BAD OR SOMETHING
ABSOLUTELY NOT. IT WAS FAR TOO HORRIFIC. IT EMPLOYED THE GREATEST ENEMY OF THE TENGU...
THAT LITTLE DUMPLING WAS FILLED TO THE GILLS WITH MACKEREL!
NO!

AHEM
IT WAS BECAUSE I'D BEEN A BAD TENGU
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE HUMANS FOUND ME, SO I RAN TO THE MOUNTAINS
YEAH, I STILL DON'T GET THE TENGU-VERSUS-MACKEREL THING
UGH..
OOH..
ANYWAY WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?
I'VE NEVER HATED MYSELF SO MUCH FOR BEING UNABLE TO DIE.
I SUFFERED BY MYSELF FOR DAYS ON END.
I COULD ONLY FOCUS ON HOW LONELY I WAS.
WHEN YOU FIRST FALL TO THE PATH OF THE TENGU YOU SPEND A DAY BURNING IN THE FIRES OF HELL. BUT I SUFFERED EVEN MORE THAT TIME.

IT WALKED, TINY STEP BY TINY STEP, AND DREW EVER CLOSER TO ME.
THOSE DAYS CONTINUED SEEMINGLY ENDLESSLY THEN, ONE NIGHT, AN UNFAMILIAR YOUKAI APPEARED FROM THE GRASSES

AS IF TO CHEER ME ON, IT LET CRY A MIGHTY "MUU!"
MUU!
WHEN IT FINALLY REACHED ME, IT FLOPPED ONTO ITS SIDE.


FOR SOME REASON, THAT VOICE HEALED MY HEART. I EMBRACED THE YOUKAI AND FELL ASLEEP.
WHEN I WOKE UP THE NEXT MORNING, MY PAIN WAS HEALED...AND MY DARLING MUU-CHAN HAD BECOME A PART OF MY LIFE.

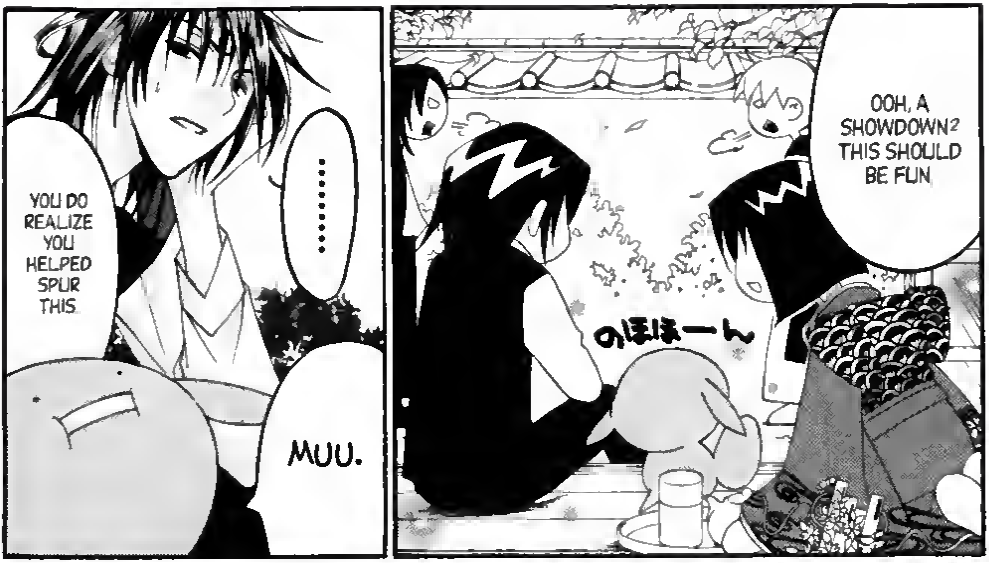
COME HERE, MUU-CHAN.
IF YOU STAY BY THAT HUMAN, YOU'LL CATCH HIS STUPIDITY.

MUU-CHAN!
Of Great interest.
REALLY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF YOUKAI MUU-CHAN IS, BUT SHE MUST BE VERY POWERFUL.

AW, SUGINO-SAMA... DOES THE CUDDLING BOTHERING YOU?
HOW LIKE A MAN TO TRY AND MONOPOLIZE HER

LET'S TAKE THIS OUTSIDE! KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA, I CHALLENGE YOU!
ガォーん
GROW UP, SUGINO.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
I'LL GO GET CHANGED
HM? OH, SURE.


YOU DO REALIZE YOU HELPED SPUR THIS.
.....
MUU.
のほほーん
OOH, A SHOWDOWN? THIS SHOULD BE FUN.

I HAVEN'T HAD MANY OFFERS FOR YOUKAI EXTERMINATION LATELY.
THANKS FOR SACRIFICING YOURSELF ON THE ALTAR OF MY SKILL UPKEEP.

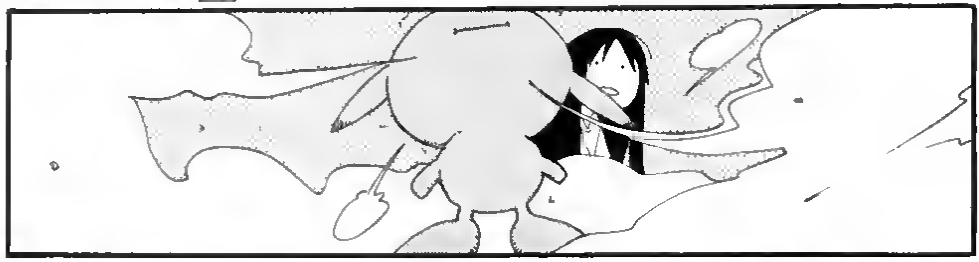
WE'LL HAVE A BATTLE OF BUDDHIST POWERS TO SEE WHO'S THE MORE CAPABLE MAN.
AS A MAGICIAN WHO BECAME A TENGU I PLAN TO KICK YOUR ASS TO THE CURB.

HA!

COMBAT CHARMS? BAH!
ひょい
IF I AVOID THEM...
ひょい
THEY'RE ONLY PAPER--
BAM

WHOA!
HUH HUH HUH!
KNOWING YOUR TERRAIN IS LAW IN BATTLE TACTICS.
YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOUNTAINS ANYMORE, SUGINO-SAMA.
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE SOMEONE WHO DOES THIS FOR A LIVING!

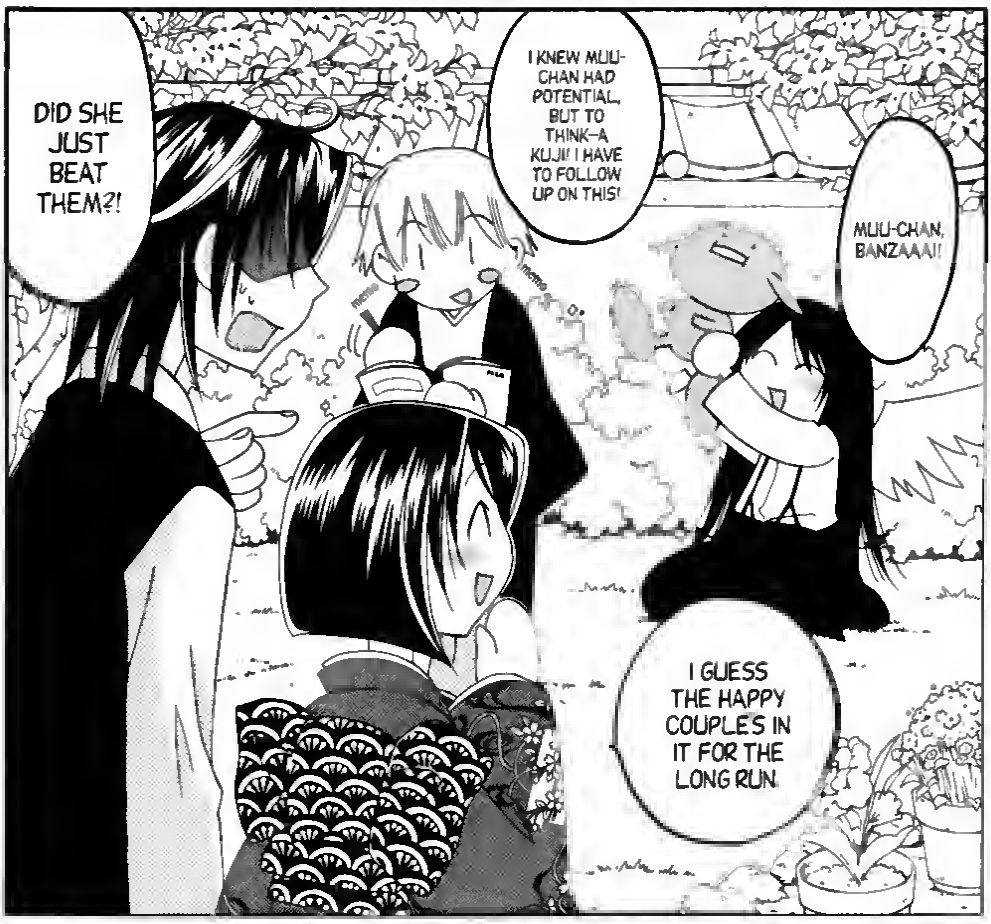
?!
KAN-CHAN DON'T USE THE KUJI ON A YOUKAI!
ARE YOU TRYING TO WIPE HIM OFF THE FACE OF THE—
AAH!



M-MUU-CHAN...YOU STOOD UP FOR ME.
YOU REALLY DO TAKE OUR MARRIAGE SERIOUSLY!

愛
LOVE
MUU-CHAN! I'M SORRY I EVER DOUBTED YOUR LOVE, MY SWEET!
MUU!

I'VE NEVER SEEN A YOUKAI LIKE THAT! I'M NERDING OUT LIKE CRAZY!
I CAN'T BELIEVE MUU-CHAN CAN SUCK UP A KUJI!


DID SHE JUST BEAT THEM?!
I KNEW MUU-CHAN HAD POTENTIAL, BUT TO THINK—A KUJI! I HAVE TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS!
MUU-CHAN, BANZAAAI!
I GUESS THE HAPPY COUPLES IN IT FOR THE LONG RUN.

BONUS STORY PART II

Raikou Minamoto Troup-sama

It's *tactics* Volume 4! Thank you so much!
Congrats! Hi--this is Kazuko Higashiyama, by the way.

Wow, I can't believe it's Volume 4 already...
My heart's pounding like a jackhammer!
I'm as happy as can be that we get to do this many volumes pretty safely (?). I hope for the best possible response from here on out, too.

Minamoto and company are important characters I wanted to have appear right along with Sugino-sama back in the day (right now he's almost completely that kind of god...but he'll be showing up again...I think), so I'm happy. Such fun. I love (?) this.
It was a blast devising characters so unlike Kantarou, Haruka and Youko.

HHHHHHGH.
HAH.
HAH...
GRRGLBRRGL.
MY STOMACH HURTS!

OPEN WIDE, HARUKA-CHAN! BRACE YOURSELF AND DRINK MY HOMEMADE HERBAL CONCOCTION!
DOWN THE HATCH!
GHHG! It's bitter!
HO HO! IT'S FINALLY TIME TO MEET EVERYONE'S FAVORITE HEALING IDOL, NURSE YOUKO!
I WONDER WHAT'S CAUSING ALL THE PAIN. DO YOU HAVE AN ULCER OR SOMETHING?
DON'T SAY THAT, YOUKO
I DON'T WANT IT TO COME TRUE.
UTTTGH.
SIGH...
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE PUT IN MORE ROOT CUTTINGS
Urrrgh.
HM... MY MEDICINE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING ON YOU.

YO, DEMON EATER. WHAT'S UP?
I CAME TO HANG.
ドカーン!!
YEEK!
AGH!
SOMETHING THE MATTER?
YOU GUYS SHOULD SERVE YOUR GUESTS TEA.
YOU ONLY COUNT AS A GUEST IF YOU USE THE DOOR SUGINO-SAMA!
AND STOP KILLING THE DYING.
PSHEW!
WHAT?!
DEMON EATER'S GOT A TUMMYACHE?!

HEY... WHERE'S KANTAROU ANYWAY?
DID HE GO OUT?
I...FEAR MACKEREL!
THAT'S WEIRD. DID HE EAT A DREADED MACKEREL?
I TOLD YOU TO STOP MAKING THIS WORSE!
WELL, I GUESS MUU-CHAN PROBABLY WANTS TO SEE KAN-CHAN, TOO.
WHAT KIND OF MASTER IS HE? FAIL! DRAG HIM OUT HERE, YOUKO.
YEAH. ABOUT THAT. HE AND HARUKA-CHAN GOT IN A FIGHT LAST NIGHT, SO HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS ROOM TO SULK.
ANO WHILE YOU'RE AT IT-- TEA!
HAAH HAAH HAAH...

YEAH?
WELL... MAYBE.
WHEN WE WERE FIGHTING YESTERDAY
YOU LOOK LIKE CRAP, OEMON EATER. YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT COULD BE?
DEFYING ME DOESN'T COME CHEAP.
Kantarou's threat of the previous evening.
YOU'LL REGRET THIS, HARUKA. ♡
HA.. HA HA. DAMN.

OH, YOUKO. YOU'RE BACK.
HOW'S KANTAR--
WELL, YES
THEN LET'S GET YOU SOME MEDICINE! I'LL MIX IT RIGHT AWAY!
YOU WENT TO SEE KANTAROU, RIGHT? IS HE STILL MAD?
H-HARUKA-CHAN! YOUR STOMACH HURTS, RIGHT?!
YOUKO..?
WHAT?! I DIDN'T. WHAT?!
YOU'RE SPILLING ALL OVER THE... WHY ARE YOU NUTS NOW?

ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY SHUT UP! YOUKO, TALK!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! KAN-CHAN WOULDN'T DO SUCH A THING!
GIMME BACK MY MUU-CHAN!
WAIT--DID YOU LEAVE MUU-CHAN IN THERE?!
COME ON, YOUKO. WHAT HAPPENED IN KANTAROU'S ROOM?
YOU INCORRIGIBLE BASTARD!
ICHINOMIYA!
KAN-CHAN!
MY... STOMACH!
MUU-CHAAAAN!
COME OUT, ICHINOMIYA! I CHALLENGE YOU!

KAN-CHAN!
WHAT'S ALL THE RACKET OUT HERE?
I WAS TRYING TO WORK.
YOU DIRTY... HOW DARE YOU PUBLISH THIS ARTICLE!
OH YEAH. THE COLUMN IN THE ACADEMIC FOLKLORE MAGAZINE WHERE I TALK ABOUT HOW YOU HAD THE NICKNAME "BALD OLD MAN" IN COLLEGE AND GOT DUMPED BY FOUR GIRLS FOR THAT?
GYAAH!
IT WASN'T FOUR! IT WAS TWO!
EITHER WAY.
GYAAH!
I'LL HAVE YOU FOR LIBEL!
UM, WHOA.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, YOUKO?

WAIT.
KANTAROU CURSED DEMON EATER?

I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S THAT EVIL.
HE WAS HITTING A NAIL INTO A STRAW EFFIGY!
IS THAT WHY MY STOMACH HURTS?
WHEN I WENT TO CALL KAN-CHAN EARLIER I SAW IT
I-I'M GOING BACK TO MY ROOM.
CLUNK

AAH! THAT'S IT--THAT RIGHT THERE!
CRAP, IT IS A STRAW EFFIGY FOR CURSES!
USING A CURSE AS REVENGE AFTER A FIGHT IS... RUDE!
OH, THAT?
YOU'RE INVADING MY PRIVACY.
AND THAT'S JUST RUDE.
WHAT ARE YOU THREE DOING IN MY ROOM?
ガラッ

IT'S AN EFFIGY CURE.
IT'S A GOOD-LUCK CHARM FOR PEOPLE WHO SUFFER FROM STOMACH-ACHES.
YOU SEAL THE STRAW DOLLS DISEASE. SEE?
LIKE THIS.
HUH?
AND THIS.
OH!
AND THEN THIS
ALL RIGHT!
IT DOESN'T... HURT ANYMORE!
I KNEW YOU WERE JUST LOOKING OUT FOR HARUKA-CHAN!
I'VE MISJUDGED YOU, KANTAROU!
IT HAPPENS
...

I WISH I COULD TELL THEM THAT THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU STAB THE DOLL CAN MAKE IT A CURSE EFFIGY
BUT THERE'S A...THING ON MY BACK. AND I CAN'T MOVE!

EITHER WAY, KANTAROU FOR THE WIN.

BY THE WAY, THE JAPANESE WORD FOR "CURSE," *JYUJYUTSU*..... CAN ALSO BE PRONOUNCED, "MAJINAHI," WHEN IT'S USED FOR GOOD.....OR "JYUSO," WHEN USED FOR EVIL!

HARUKA! TIME TO WAKE UP!
BREAKFAST IS READY!
ギシ
ギシ
NNGH...I DIDN'T SLEEP ENOUGH.
PFFT!
ぶ

BONUS STORY PART III

Hello, this is Sakura Kinoshita!

Thank you very much for buying Tactics Volume 4.

It's finally Volume 4... Wow, we're moving at a slow pace.

But we'll do our best! Volume 5 is coming out soon!

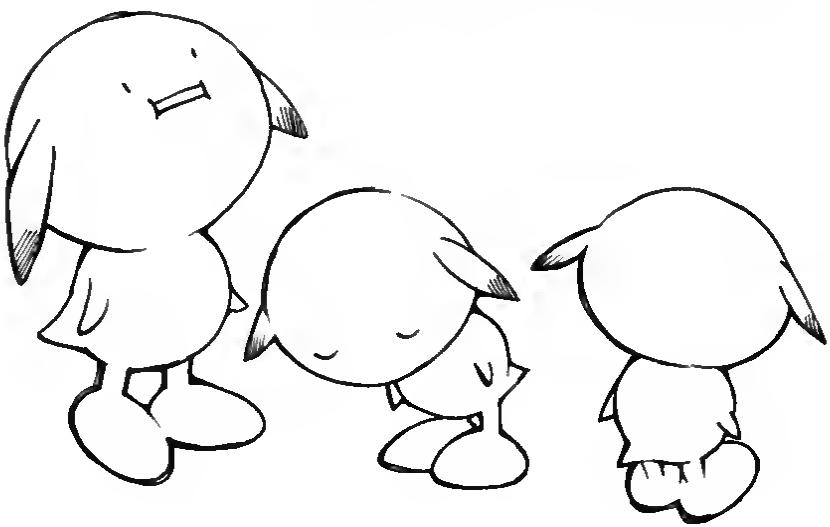
This time around, we got to see the new character Raikou-san.

He's my favorite kind of villain. (Actually, this manga's full of villains.)

I'm looking forward to how he'll develop from now on.

Well, let's meet up again in Volume 5!

It's coming up right around the corner!



2004 ◦ KINOSHITA SAKURA

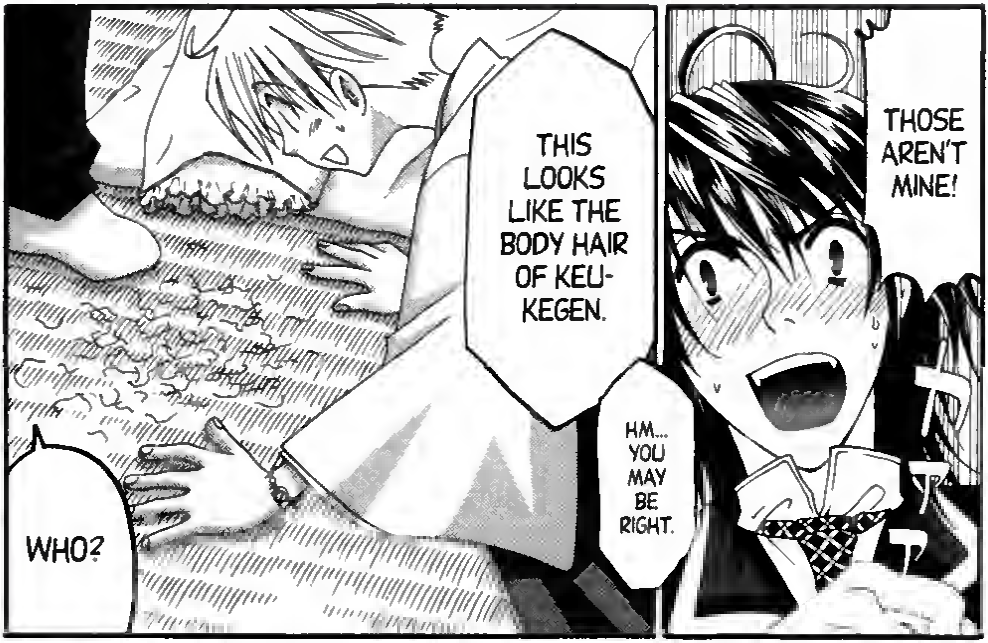
WHAT THE HELL?!
I HAVE TO STOP.. LAUGHING! STOP IT, HARUKA!
HA HA HA! OW, MY.. INNARDS!
WHEEZE WHEEZE
Hyaaa Ha Ha Ha Ha!
K-KAN-CHAN, THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
BFFT!
LOOK! HARUKA LOOKS STUPID!

KAN-CHAN, I THINK YOU OWE HIM AN APOLOGY.
YOU'RE A FOUL CREATURE.
M-ME? APOLOGIZE? YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T DO THAT TO YOURSELF?
WHY WOULD I DO THIS?!
SO YOU WOKE UP LIKE THAT.
I'M RATHER MIFFED THAT YOU'RE TREATING ME LIKE I DID IT TO HIM
LOOK BACK ON ALL THE CRAP YOU'VE DONE IN THE PAST, KAN-CHAN
I LIVE BY THE POLICY OF NEVER LOOKING BACK.
AND I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTUALLY ACCUSING ME OF THIS.
THINK ABOUT IT. CAN YOU IMAGINE ME PLAYING A PRANK...
THAT I'D IMMEDIATELY BE CAUGHT FOR AND RECEIVE NO MONEY AS A RESULT OF?

I THINK WHOEVER DID IT BROKE INTO THIS HOUSE!
Yes.
implied by their collective look.
I...
AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LIKES TO TORTURE US
BE A MAN AND CONFESS
IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVE MONEY OR ANYTHING OF VALUE
WHO WOULD BREAK INTO THIS PLACE?
I'LL FIND THE REAL CULPRIT! JUST YOU WAIT!
데데데~
HUH?

INVESTIGATING, OBVIOUSLY. I'M LOOKING FOR CLUES LEFT BY THE CULPRIT.
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
Gasp!
DID SHE FIND THE BEADS I'VE BEEN BUYING IN SECRET?
WHAT'S...?
HARUKA-CHAN! WHAT'S THIS?!
LOOK AT THEM ALL!
HOW UNHYGIENIC, HARUKA. CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF.
HAIR

tactics 4


THOSE AREN'T MINE!
THIS LOOKS LIKE THE BODY HAIR OF KEU-KEGEN.
HM... YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
WHO?

A very furry youkai that is spotted so infrequently, its name is often written in Chinese as "rare being, rarely seen."
Keu Kegen!

I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE MYSELF, BUT...
UM... WOW. EW.
THAT'S THE YOUKAI WHO PLAYED WITH MY HAIR?

...MAYBE NOW I FINALLY CAN! I HOPE HE COMES BACK!
UM.. WOW. EW.
DON'T TRY TO SELL ME!
BLACK, LONG HAIR! GET YER BLACK, LONG HAAAIR!
STOP THAT--IT'S CREEPY!
PRETTY PLEASE? IT LOOKS LIKE KEI-KUN LIKES LONG, BLACK HAIR
AND YOUR HAIR'S SO SOFT AND BEAUTIF--
DON'T TRY TO SEDUCE ME!
NO. NO!
HARUKA, YOU'LL BE THE BAIT.
Pat
WELL? DID YOU FIND HIM?

I DON'T WANT TO BE TOUCHED IN MY SLEEP AGAIN.
AND I'M SURE KANTAROU IS PLANNING TO LAUGH.
Wants to Hide.
NO! HIS ENERGY IS STILL HERE, SEE?
HE HAS TO BE IN HERE!
CHING
CHING
Totally excited!
IF HE'S A PHANTOM YOUKAI, HE PROBABLY ALREADY DITCHED.
Skeptical.
IT'S GONNA BE A PAIN TO CLEAN UP THIS MUCH HAIR EVERY DAY.
LOOK AT THIS MESS.

ACK! A ROBBER!
I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S NOT MINE!
OH.
THIS IS BAD, DEMON EATER.
YOU SHOULD CHERISH EVERY STRAND OF PRECIOUS HAIR ON YOUR HEAD.
HM?
FINE--I'LL DO IT OVER
ARGH!
SUGINO-SAMA! I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO USE THE FRONT DOOR!
MUU.
ARGH!
HEY, MUU-CHAN HOW ARE THINGS?
I'M COMING IN, HOSTS!
THIS IS DEFINITELY OVER-COMPLICATED
I THINK HE'S LEAVING AND THEN COMING BACK IN THROUGH THE DOOR
THIS IS A PLAN I CAN APPROVE OF
THAT'S IT! I'VE FOUND SOMEONE EVEN MORE SUITABLE FOR THIS THAN HARUKA!
WHERE DID SUGINO-SAMA GO?!

みくう
YO.
I CAME TO HANG OUT. ENTERTAIN ME.
ドドドドドド
NOW! SOMEONE WITH EVEN BLACKER, LONGER HAIR!
KEU-KUN WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST THE LURE OF SUGINO--
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HEAD?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? AND... WHOA... WHY AM I SUDDENLY SO DIZZY?
ラララ
ゴッ!!
AAGH! WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!
Late...

WHA?!
THERE YOU ARE!
AAAAAAGH!
GET IT OFF ME!
KEU-KEGEN!
EW!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!

WAAAIT!
!!
HEY! SUGINO YOU'RE BALDING!
WHAT?!
WHAT WAS THAT THING?!
YOU OKAY, SUGINO?

HARUKA, BEHIND YOU!
I KNEW BLACK HAIR WAS THE KEY! KEU-KEGEN'S REALLY GOT A THING FOR--HEY!
HE'S AWFULLY NIMBLE...
...FOR A BALL OF HAIR.

HARUKA-CHAN! DON'T FORGET THAT YOU'RE STILL INSIDE THE HOUSE!
BE MY FRIEEEND!
GIMME BACK MY HAAAIR!
Naumaku saraba tatagyatei-byakku...
OAMMIT AT THIS RATE, WE'LL NEVER--
ぴょーっ

Saraba bokkeibyaku ...
Sarabata tarata senda.
A KAKAIJU?!
Makatoshaba ken.

STOP THAT!
gyakigyaki saraba ...
BII?!
ムニッ!!

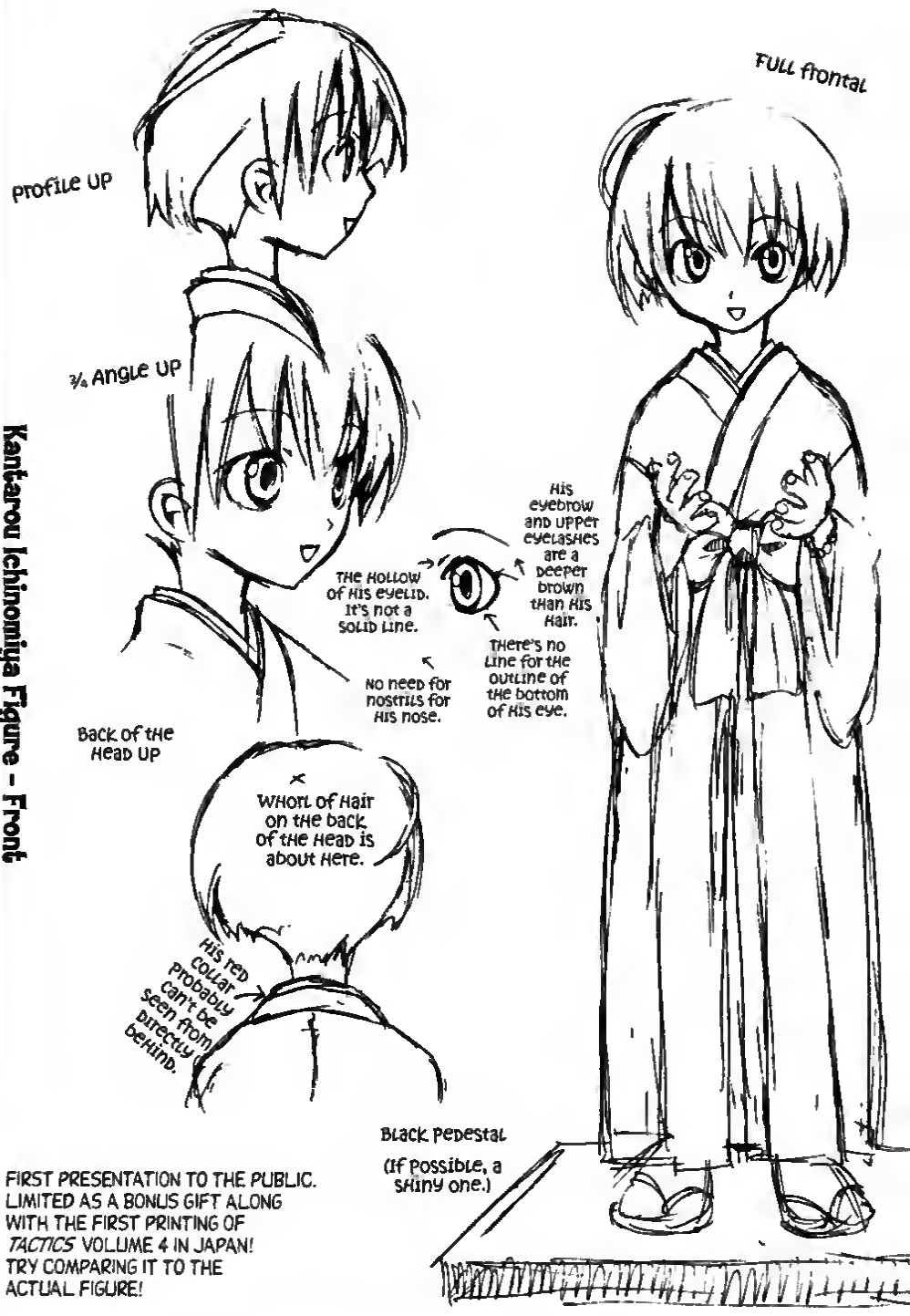
KANTAROU, JUST GIVE IT UP
REFLEX?
HUH?!

WHOOPS. REFLEX, I GUESS.
DON'T CALL ON THE IMMOVABLE ONE JUST TO TAKE CARE OF A HAIRBALL YOUKAI!

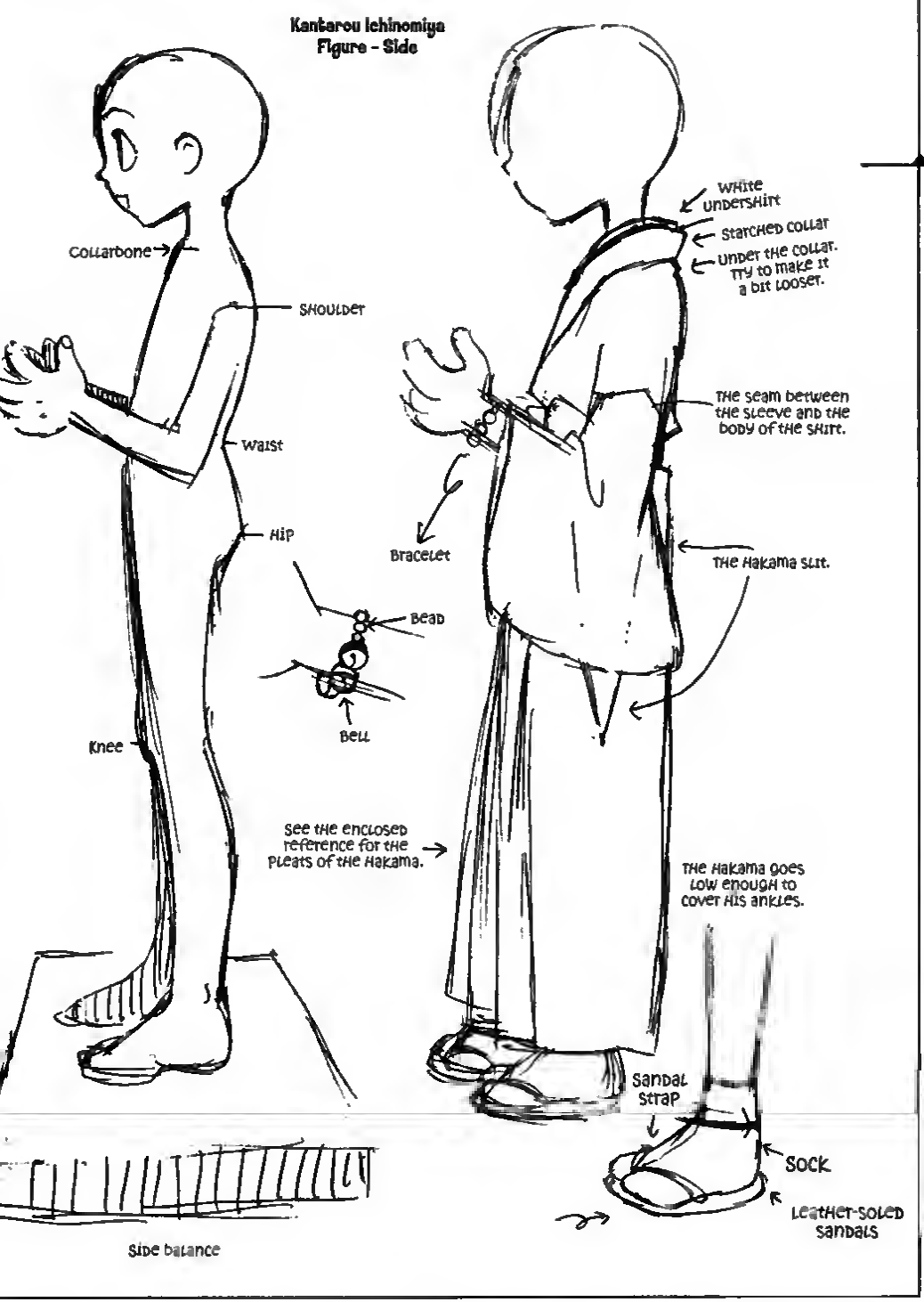
HE GOT AWAY!
DAMN!

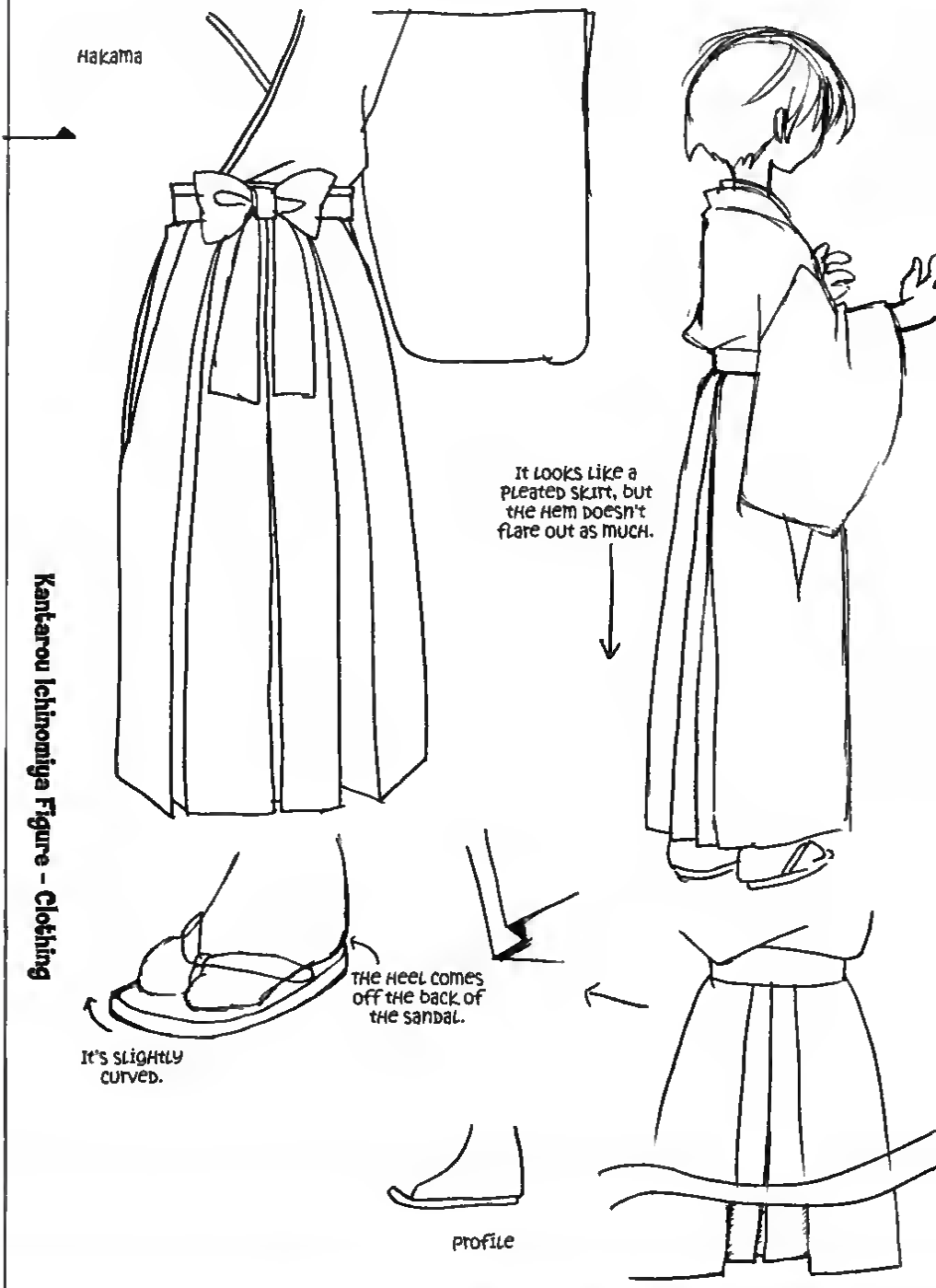
MORNING, YOU TWO!
I WAS STILL SO ANXIOUS ABOUT IT THAT I COULDN'T SLEEP.
...IT LOOKS LIKE HE DIDN'T COME OUT THIS MORNING.
ガーン
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE UNTIL IT GROWS BACK!
HOT!
YOUR DESPERATION FOR SOME THINGS NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME

tactics 4 THE END


Kantarou Ichinomiya Figure - Front
Profile up
3/4 Angle up
Back of the Head up
Full frontal
His eyebrow and upper eyelashes are a deeper brown than his hair.
The hollow of his eyelid. It's not a solid line.
There's no line for the outline of the bottom of his eye.
No need for nostrils for his nose.
Whorl of hair on the back of the head is about here.
His red collar probably can't be seen from directly behind.
Black Pedestal
(If possible, a shiny one.)
FIRST PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC. LIMITED AS A BONUS GIFT ALONG WITH THE FIRST PRINTING OF *TACTICS* VOLUME 4 IN JAPAN! TRY COMPARING IT TO THE ACTUAL FIGURE!

tactics FIGURE ROUGH SKETCH GALLERY


Kantarou Ichinomiya
Figure - Side
Collarbone
Shoulder
Waist
Hip
Knee
Bead
Bell
Bracelet
See the enclosed reference for the pleats of the Hakama.
Side balance
White undershirt
Starched collar
Under the collar. Try to make it a bit looser.
The seam between the sleeve and the body of the shirt.
The Hakama slit.
The Hakama goes low enough to cover his ankles.
Sandal strap
Sock
Leather-soled sandals


Hakama
It looks like a pleated skirt, but the hem doesn't flare out as much.
The heel comes off the back of the sandal.
It's slightly curved.
Profile

Kantarou Ichinomiya Figure – Clothing

His subordinate youkai.

IN THE NEXT VOLUME OF

tactics

Kantarou's struggle against the mysterious Raikou Minamoto and his strange band continues as the even more mysterious Father Edwards returns to the fray! Facing off against possessed actresses and demons from the great beyond, Haruka and Kantarou are up to their necks in trouble, especially when Minamoto's true motives are finally revealed....

Language and Culture Notes on *tactics* vol. 4!

Chapter 9.

~Kan-chan's opening mantra: a fire spell of purification known as the Mantra of Acalanatha Vidya-raja (Japanese: "Fudou-Myou-ou"), meaning roughly, "Pay homage to Buddha or begone, leave or be punished and purified, destroy, Oh Wrathful One, turn away and begone!"

~The spell continues: roughly translated, "Devils and the dark path, in everything is Buddha. The four devils (hindrances caused by the five components, obstructions caused by one's mental and physical function, hindrances of earthly desire, hindrance of death, hindrance of the Devil of the Sixth Heaven) and the three obstacles (obstacles of earthly desires, obstacles of karma, obstacles of retribution), all come on Buddha's path. The world of the devils and the world of Buddha live according to the same principles. In all ways directly, without a difference."

~Gidayuu reciters: performers of a classic Japanese ballad drama, who use their voices and special theatrical instrument.

~Bunraku theater: very sophisticated traditional puppet theater, originating in Osaka, and closely associated with kabuki, to the extent that several famous playwrights wrote for both mediums. Puppeteers appear on stage with the puppets, but often robed in black, so as to be "invisible" to the audience.

~Kantorau's heihaku incantation: Your editor fails! This prayer starts with the traditional "namu amida butsu" of many Buddhist incantations, and I never managed to find the specific one (if there is a specific one) that matches this. Help!

~Heihaku: a Shinto offering of cloth.

~Kan-chan lays the smack down: This is all a part of a incantation that roughly means "Demons and heretical doctrine, monsters and fierce gods, venomous beasts and malicious dragons, and venomous insects, hear the voice of the khakkhara, hide from the harm of poison, awaken your aspiration for Buddhahood, undertake many journeys and quickly gain enlightenment."

Chapter 10.

~The return of the Kuji! See previous volume for note.

~Shugendou: a Japanese mountain asceticism-shamanism incorporating Shinto and Buddhist concepts.

~A note on turn of the century Japanese religious practice. Those visiting modern Japan may be surprised by how easily the traditional Shinto and Buddhist practices meld together (tactics uses both fairly equally), but there was a time when this was not the case. As part of the political decision to promote the Emperor over the shogun during the Meiji Restoration, "State Shinto," which revered the Imperial family as descendants of the gods, was instituted and promoted heavily, to the denigration of Buddhism and other practices. The political background of Hasumi's role in this chapter reflects the government's insistence on the separation of faiths, especially ones that were deemed insufficiently "modern," even as the State itself pushed one particular religion.

~Doujigiri-Yasutsuna: the name of Raiko's sword roughly translates to "child-slaying quiet rope."

~Koushin: this concept in the Japanese zodiac points to a day of misfortune. It's comprised of two terms "kou," the term from the Chinese zodiac system associated with metal and planet Venus, and "shin," meaning painful. But what exactly this means in regards to Haruka had yet to be revealed.

~Shakujyou: Haruka's staff is also known as a khakkhara in Sanskrit. Often translated as "alarm staff" or "sounding staff," this object is carried by many a monk from India to Tibet to Japan, be they Buddhist or Hindu. As an attribute of the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (known in Japan as "Jizo"), it is sometimes called "Jizo's staff" and features six rings, signifying that this bodhisattva is prepared to help the beings of all six realms of existence. In other cases, the number of rings is four, reminding those who hear the staff's jingling sound of the Buddhist Four Truths.

Bonus stories

~Jizo statues: as mentioned above, Jizo is the Japanese name for the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha. These statues are seen all over Japan, and are often wearing little knit hats or shawls donated by worshipers. Jizo is the guardian of travelers and of children.

~Keu-Kegen: the Chinese characters for Keu-kegen are "hair-feather-hair-exist" but in this second instance they are replaced with "rare-being-rare-sighting."

~Kakaijuu: this is the third mantra to Acalanatha Vidya-raja, or Fudou-Myou-ou, "The Immovable One." The mantra roughly translates as, "Everything becomes Tathagato, so pay respect to all the different facets of existence."

~Fudou-Myou-ou: coming from ancient Hindu philosophy, but important in Esoteric Japanese Buddhist practice, The Immovable One carries a demon-subduing sword in one hand, and a rope in the other. A god of fire, a destroyer of ignorance and illusion, and very powerful, you can see why Kantorou's youkai would be so dismayed that he would be so casually invoked! Your humble editor is a big fan of Fudou-Myou-ou.